CHRISTABEL; KUBLA KHAN, A VISION; THE PAINS OF SLEEP

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

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CHRISTABEL,

&c.

BY

S. T. COLERIDGE, ESQ.

THIRD EDITION.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE-STREET,
BY WILLIAM BULMER AND CO. CLEVELAND-ROW,
ST. JAMES'S.

1816.

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Christabel.

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PREFACE.

THE first part of the following poem was written in the year one thousand seven hundred and ninety seven, at Stowey in the county of Somerset. The second part, after my return from Germany, in the year one thousand eight hundred, at Keswick, Cumberland. Since the latter date, my poetic powers have been, till very lately, in a state of suspended animation. But as, in my very first conception of the tale, I had the whole present to my mind, with the wholeness, no less than with the liveliness of a vision; I trust that I shall be able to embody in

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verse the three parts yet to come, in the course of the present year.

It is probable, that if the poem had been finished at either of the former periods, or if even the first and second part had been published in the year 1800, the impression of its originality would have been much greater than I dare at present expect. But for this, I have only my own indolence to blame. The dates are mentioned for the exclusive purpose of precluding charges of plagiarism or servile imitation from myself. For there is among us a set of critics, who seem to hold, that every possible thought and image is traditional; who have no notion that there are such things as fountains in the world, small as well as great; and who would therefore charitably derive every rill, they behold flowing, from a perforation made in some other man's tank. I am confident however, that as far as the present poem is concerned, the celebrated poets whose writings I might be suspected of having imitated, either in particular passages, or

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in the tone and the spirit of the whole, would be among the first to vindicate me from the charge, and who, on any striking coincidence, would permit me to address them in this doggrel version of two monkish Latin hexameters:

'Tis mine and it is likewise your's,
But an if this will not do;
Let it be mine, good friend! for I
Am the poorer of the two.

I have only to add, that the metre of the Christabel is not, properly speaking, irregular, though it may seem so from its being founded on a new principle: namely, that of counting in each line the accents, not the syllables. Though the latter may vary from seven to twelve, yet in each line the accents will be found to be only four. Nevertheless this occasional variation in the number of syllables is not introduced wantonly, or for the mere ends of convenience, but in correspondence with some transition in the nature of the imagery or passion.

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CHRISTABEL.

PART I.

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CHRISTABEL.

'Tis the middle of night by the castle clock,
And the owls have awaken'd the crowing cock;
Tu—whit!———Tu—whoo!
And hark, again! the crowing cock,
How drowsily it crew.

Sir Leoline, the Baron rich,
Hath a toothless mastiff bitch;

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From her kennel beneath the rock
She makes answer to the clock,
Four for the quarters, and twelve for the hour;
Ever and aye, moonshine or shower,
Sixteen short howls, not over loud;
Some say, she sees my lady's shroud.

Is the night chilly and dark?
The night is chilly, but not dark.
The thin gray cloud is spread on high,
It covers but not hides the sky.
The moon is behind, and at the full;
And yet she looks both small and dull.
The night is chill, the cloud is gray:
'Tis a month before the month of May,
And the Spring comes slowly up this way.

The lovely lady, Christabel,
Whom her father loves so well,

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What makes her in the wood so late,
A furlong from the castle gate?
She had dreams all yesternight
Of her own betrothed knight;
Dreams, that made her moan and leap,
As on her bed she lay in sleep;
And she in the midnight wood will pray
For the weal of her lover that's far away.

She stole along, she nothing spoke,
The breezes they were still also;
And nought was green upon the oak,
But moss and rarest misletoe:
She kneels beneath the huge oak tree,
And in silence prayeth she.

The lady leaps up suddenly,
The lovely lady, Christabel!

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It moan'd as near, as near can be,
But what it is, she cannot tell.—
On the other side it seems to be,
Of the huge, broad-breasted, old oak tree.

The night is chill; the forest bare;
Is it the wind that moaneth bleak?
There is not wind enough in the air
To move away the ringlet curl
From the lovely lady's cheek —
There is not wind enough to twirl
The one red leaf, the last of its clan,
That dances as often as dance it can,
Hanging so light, and hanging so high,
On the topmost twig that looks up at the sky.

Hush, beating heart of Christabel!
Jesu, Maria, shield her well!

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She folded her arms beneath her cloak,
And stole to the other side of the oak.
What sees she there?

There she sees a damsel bright,
Drest in a silken robe of white;
Her neck, her feet, her arms were bare,
And the jewels disorder'd in her hair.
I guess, 'twas frightful there to see
A lady so richly clad as she—
Beautiful exceedingly!

Mary mother, save me now!
(Said Christabel,) And who art thou?

The lady strange made answer meet,
And her voice was faint and sweet:—
Have pity on my sore distress,
I scarce can speak for weariness.

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Stretch forth thy hand, and have no fear,
Said Christabel, How cam'st thou here?
And the lady, whose voice was faint and sweet,
Did thus pursue her answer meet:—

My sire is of a noble line,
And my name is Geraldine.
Five warriors seiz'd me yestermorn,
Me, even me, a maid forlorn:
They chok'd my cries with force and fright,
And tied me on a palfrey white.
The palfrey was as fleet as wind,
And they rode furiously behind.
They spurr'd amain, their steeds were white;
And once we cross'd the shade of night.
As sure as Heaven shall rescue me,
I have no thought what men they be;
Nor do I know how long it is
(For I have lain in fits, I wis)

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Since one, the tallest of the five,
Took me from the palfrey's back,
A weary woman, scarce alive.
Some mutter'd words his comrades spoke:
He plac'd me underneath this oak,
He swore they would return with haste;
Whither they went I cannot tell—
I thought I heard, some minutes past,
Sounds as of a castle bell.
Stretch forth thy hand (thus ended she),
And help a wretched maid to flee.

Then Christabel stretch'd forth her hand
And comforted fair Geraldine,
Saying, that she should command
The service of Sir Leoline;
And straight be convoy'd, free from thrall,
Back to her noble father's hall.

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So up she rose, and forth they pass'd,
With hurrying steps, yet nothing fast;
Her lucky stars the lady blest,
And Christabel she sweetly said—
All our household are at rest,
Each one sleeping in his bed;
Sir Leoline is weak in health,
And may not well awaken'd be;
So to my room we'll creep in stealth,
And you to-night must sleep with me.

They cross'd the moat, and Christabel
Took the key that fitted well;
A little door she open'd straight,
All in the middle of the gate;
The gate that was iron'd within and without,
Where an army in battle array had march'd out.

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The lady sank, belike thro' pain,
And Christabel with might and main
Lifted her up, a weary weight,
Over the threshold of the gate:
Then the lady rose again,
And mov'd, as she were not in pain.

So free from danger, free from fear,
They cross'd the court: right glad they were.
And Christabel devoutly cried,
To the lady by her side,
Praise we the Virgin all divine
Who hath rescued thee from thy distress!
Alas, alas! said Geraldine,
I cannot speak for weariness.
So free from danger, free from fear,
They cross'd the court: right glad they were

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Outside her kennel, the mastiff old
Lay fast asleep, in moonshine cold.
The mastiff old did not awake,
Yet she an angry moan did make!
And what can ail the mastiff bitch?
Never till now she utter'd yell
Beneath the eye of Christabel.
Perhaps it is the owlet's scritch:
For what can ail the mastiff bitch?

They pass'd the hall, that echoes still,
Pass as lightly as you will!
The brands were flat, the brands were dying,
Amid their own white ashes lying;
But when the lady pass'd, there came
A tongue of light, a fit of flame;
And Christabel saw the lady's eye,
And nothing else saw she thereby,

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Save the boss of the shield of Sir Leoline tall,
Which hung in a murky old nitch in the wall.
O softly tread, said Christabel,
My father seldom sleepeth well.

Sweet Christabel her feet she bares,
And they are creeping up the stairs;
Now in glimmer, and now in gloom,
And now they pass the Baron's room,
As still as death with stifled breath!
And now have reach'd her chamber door;
And now with eager feet press down
The rushes of her chamber floor.

The moon shines dim in the open air,
And not a moonbeam enters here.
But they without its light can see
The chamber carv'd so curiously,

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Carv'd with figures strange and sweet,
All made out of the carver's brain,
For a lady's chamber meet:
The lamp with twofold silver chain
Is fasten'd to an angel's feet.

The silver lamp burns dead and dim;
But Christabel the lamp will trim.
She trimm'd the lamp, and made it bright,
And left it swinging to and fro,
While Geraldine, in wretched plight,
Sank down upon the floor below.

O weary lady, Geraldine,
I pray you, drink this cordial wine!
It is a wine of virtuous powers;
My mother made it of wild flowers.

And will your mother pity me,
Who am a maiden most forlorn?

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Christabel answer'd—Woe is me!
She died the hour that I was born.
I have heard the gray-hair'd friar tell,
How on her death-bed she did say,
That she should hear the castle bell
Strike twelve upon my wedding day.
O mother dear! that thou wert here!
I would, said Geraldine, she were!

But soon with alter'd voice, said she—
"Off, wandering mother! Peak and pine!
"I have power to bid thee flee."
Alas! what ails poor Geraldine?
Why stares she with unsettled eye?
Can she the bodiless dead espy?
And why with hollow voice cries she,
"Off, woman, off! this hour is mine—
"Though thou her guardian spirit be,
"Off, woman, off! 'tis given to me."

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Then Christabel knelt by the lady's side,
And rais'd to heaven her eyes so blue—
Alas! said she, this ghastly ride—
Dear lady! it hath wilder'd you!
The lady wip'd her moist cold brow,
And faintly said, " 'Tis over now!"

Again the wild-flower wine she drank:
Her fair large eyes 'gan glitter bright,
And from the floor whereon she sank,
The lofty lady stood upright:
She was most beautiful to see,
Like a lady of a far countrée.

And thus the lofty lady spake —
All they, who live in the upper sky,
Do love you, holy Christabel!
And you love them, and for their sake
And for the good which me befel,

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Even I in my degree will try,
Fair maiden, to requite you well.
But now unrobe yourself; for I
Must pray, ere yet in bed I lie.

Quoth Christabel, so let it be!
And as the lady bade, did she.
Her gentle limbs did she undress,
And lay down in her loveliness.

But thro' her brain of weal and woe
So many thoughts mov'd to and fro,
That vain it were her lids to close;
So half-way from the bed she rose,
And on her elbow did recline
To look at the lady Geraldine.

Beneath the lamp the lady bow'd,
And slowly roll'd her eyes around;

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Then drawing in her breath aloud,
Like one that shudder'd, she unbound
The cincture from beneath her breast:
Her silken robe, and inner vest,
Dropt to her feet, and full in view,
Behold! her bosom and half her side——
A sight to dream of, not to tell!
And she is to sleep by Christabel.

She took two paces, and a stride,
And lay down by the maiden's side:
And in her arms the maid she took,
Ah wel-a-day!
And with low voice and doleful look
These words did say:
In the touch of this bosom there worketh a spell,
Which is lord of thy utterance, Christabel!
Thou knowest to-night, and wilt know to-morrow
This mark of my shame, this seal of my sorrow;

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But vainly thou warrest,
For this is alone in
Thy power to declare,
That in the dim forest
Thou heard'st a low moaning,
And found'st a bright lady, surpassingly fair:
And didst bring her home with thee in love and in charity,
To shield her and shelter her from the damp air.

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THE CONCLUSION

TO

PART THE FIRST.

It was a lovely sight to see
The lady Christabel, when she
Was praying at the old oak tree.
Amid the jagged shadows
Of mossy leafless boughs,
Kneeling in the moonlight,
To make her gentle vows;
Her slender palms together prest,
Heaving sometimes on her breast;
Her face resign'd to bliss or bale—
Her face, oh call it fair not pale,

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And both blue eyes more bright than clear,
Each about to have a tear.

With open eyes (ah woe is me!)
Asleep, and dreaming fearfully,
Fearfully dreaming, yet I wis,
Dreaming that alone, which is——
O sorrow and shame! Can this be she,
The lady, who knelt at the old oak tree?
And lo! the worker of these harms,
That holds the maiden in her arms,
Seems to slumber still and mild,
As a mother with her child.

A star hath set, a star hath risen,
O Geraldine! since arms of thine
Have been the lovely lady's prison.
O Geraldine! one hour was thine—

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Thou'st had thy will! By tairn and rill,
The night-birds all that hour were still.
But now they are jubilant anew,
From cliff and tower, tu—whoo! tu—whoo!
Tu—whoo! tu—whoo! from wood and fell!

And see! the lady Christabel
Gathers herself from out her trance;
Her limbs relax, her countenance
Grows sad and soft; the smooth thin lids
Close o'er her eyes; and tears she sheds—
Large tears that leave the lashes bright!
And oft the while she seems to smile
As infants at a sudden light!

Yea, she doth smile, and she doth weep,
Like a youthful hermitess,
Beauteous in a wilderness,
Who, praying always, prays in sleep.

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And, if she move unquietly,
Perchance, 'tis but the blood so free,
Comes back and tingles in her feet.
No doubt, she hath a vision sweet.
What if her guardian spirit 'twere
What if she knew her mother near?
But this she knows, in joys and woes,
That saints will aid if men will call:
For the blue sky bends over all!

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CHRISTABEL.

PART II.

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CHRISTABEL.

EACH matin bell, the Baron saith,
Knells us back to a world of death.
These words Sir Leoline first said,
When he rose and found his lady dead:
These words Sir Leoline will say
Many a morn to his dying day.

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And hence the custom and law began,
That still at dawn the sacristan,
Who duly pulls the heavy bell,
Five and forty beads must tell
Between each stroke—a warning knell,
Which not a soul can choose but hear
From Bratha Head to Wyn'dermere.

Saith Bracy the bard, So let it knell!
And let the drowsy sacristan
Still count as slowly as he can!
There is no lack of such, I ween
As well fill up the space between.
In Langdale Pike and Witch's Lair,
And Dungeon-ghyll so foully rent,
With ropes of rock and bells of air
Three sinful sextons' ghosts are pent,
Who all give back, one after t'other,
The death-note to their living brother;

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And oft too, by the knell offended,
Just as their one! two! three! is ended,
The devil mocks the doleful tale
With a merry peal from Borrowdale.

The air is still! thro' mist and cloud
That merry peal comes ringing loud;
And Geraldine shakes off her dread,
And rises lightly from the bed;
Puts on her silken vestments white,
And tricks her hair in lovely plight,
And nothing doubting of her spell
Awakens the lady Christabel.
"Sleep you, sweet lady Christabel?
"I trust that you have rested well."

And Christabel awoke and spied
The same who lay down by her side—

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O rather say, the same whom she
Rais'd up beneath the old oak tree!
Nay, fairer yet! and yet more fair!
For she belike hath drunken deep
Of all the blessedness of sleep!
And while she spake, her looks, her air
Such gentle thankfulness declare,
That (so it seem'd) her girded vests
Grew tight beneath her heaving breasts.
"Sure I have sinn'd!" said Christabel,
"Now heaven be prais'd if all be well!"
And in low faltering tones, yet sweet,
Did she the lofty lady greet
With such perplexity of mind
As dreams too lively leave behind.

So quickly she rose, and quickly array'd
Her maiden limbs, and having pray'd

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That He, who on the cross did groan,
Might wash away her sins unknown,
She forthwith led fair Geraldine
To meet her sire, Sir Leoline.

The lovely maid and the lady tall
Are pacing both into the hall,
And pacing on thro' page and groom
Enter the Baron's presence room.

The Baron rose, and while he prest
His gentle daughter to his breast,
With cheerful wonder in his eyes
The lady Geraldine espies,
And gave such welcome to the same,
As might beseem so bright a dame!

But when he heard the lady's tale,
And when she told her father's name,

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Why wax'd Sir Leoline so pale,
Murmuring o'er the name again,
Lord Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine?

Alas! they had been friends in youth;
But whispering tongues can poison truth;
And constancy lives in realms above;
And life is thorny; and youth is vain;
And to be wroth with one we love,
Doth work like madness in the brain.
And thus it chanc'd, as I divine,
With Roland and Sir Leoline.
Each spake words of high disdain
And insult to his heart's best brother:
They parted—ne'er to meet again!
But never either found another
To free the hollow heart from paining—
They stood aloof, the scars remaining,
Like cliffs which had been rent asunder;

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A dreary sea now flows between,
But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder,
Shall wholly do away, I ween,
The marks of that which once hath been.

Sir Leoline, a moment's space,
Stood gazing on the damsel's face;
And the youthful Lord of Tryermaine
Came back upon his heart again.

O then the Baron forgot his age,
His noble heart swell'd high with rage;
He swore by the wounds in Jesu's side,
He would proclaim it far and wide
With trump and solemn heraldry,
That they, who thus had wrong'd the dame,
Were base as spotted infamy!
"And if they dare deny the same,

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" My herald shall appoint a week,
" And let the recreant traitors seek
" My tournay court—that there and then
" I may dislodge their reptile souls
" From the bodies and forms of men !"
He spake: his eye in lightning rolls!
For the lady was ruthlessly seiz'd; and he kenn'd
In the beautiful lady the child of his friend!

And now the tears were on his face,
And fondly in his arms he took
Fair Geraldine, who met th' embrace,
Prolonging it with joyous look.
Which when she view'd, a vision fell
Upon the soul of Christabel,
The vision of fear, the touch and pain!
She shrunk and shudder'd, and saw again
(Ah, woe is me! Was it for thee,
Thou gentle maid! such sights to see?)

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Again she saw that bosom old,
Again she felt that bosom cold,
And drew in her breath with a hissing sound:
Whereat the Knight turn'd wildly round,
And nothing saw, but his own sweet maid
With eyes uprais'd, as one that pray'd.

The touch, the sight, had pass'd away,
And in its stead that vision blest,
Which comforted her after-rest,
While in the lady's arms she lay,
Had put a rapture in her breast,
And on her lips and o'er her eyes
Spread smiles like light!
With new surprise,
"What ails then my beloved child?"
The Baron said—His daughter mild
Made answer, "All will yet be well!"
I ween, she had no power to tell

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Aught else: so mighty was the spell.
Yet he, who saw this Geraldine,
Had deem'd her sure a thing divine,
Such sorrow with such grace she blended,
As if she fear'd, she had offended
Sweet Christabel, that gentle maid!
And with such lowly tones she pray'd,
She might be sent without delay
Home to her father's mansion.
" Nay!
" Nay, by my soul!" said Leoline.
" Ho! Bracy the bard, the charge be thine!
" Go thou, with music sweet and loud,
" And take two steeds with trappings proud,
" And take the youth whom thou lov'st best
" To bear thy harp, and learn thy song,
" And clothe you both in solemn vest,
" And over the mountains haste along,

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" Lest wand'ring folk, that are abroad,
" Detain you on the valley road.

" And when he has cross'd the Irthing flood,
" My merry bard! he hastes, he hastes
" Up Knorren Moor, thro' Halegarth Wood,
" And reaches soon that castle good
" Which stands and threatens Scotland's wastes.

" Bard Bracy! bard Bracy! your horses are fleet,
" Ye must ride up the hall, your music so sweet,
" More loud than your horses' echoing feet!
" And loud and loud to Lord Roland call,
" Thy daughter is safe in Langdale hall!
" Thy beautiful daughter is safe and free—
" Sir Leoline greets thee thus thro' me.
" He bids thee come without delay
" With all thy numerous array;
" And take thy lovely daughter home,

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" And he will meet thee on the way
" With all his numerous array
" White with their panting palfreys' foam,
" And, by mine honour! I will say,
" That I repent me of the day
" When I spake words of fierce disdain
" To Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine!—
" —For since that evil hour hath flown,
" Many a summer's sun have shone;
" Yet ne'er found I a friend again
" Like Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine."

The lady fell, and clasped his knees,
Her face uprais'd, her eyes o'erflowing;
And Bracy replied, with faltering voice,
His gracious hail on all bestowing:—
Thy words, thou sire of Christabel,
Are sweeter than my harp can tell;

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Yet might I gain a boon of thee,
This day my journey should not be,
So strange a dream hath come to me :
That I had vow'd with music loud
To clear yon wood from thing unblest,
Warn'd by a vision in my rest !
For in my sleep I saw that dove,
That gentle bird, whom thou dost love,
And call'st by thy own daughter's name—
Sir Leoline ! I saw the same,
Fluttering, and uttering fearful moan,
Among the green herbs in the forest alone.
Which when I saw and when I heard,
I wonder'd what might ail the bird :
For nothing near it could I see,
Save the grass and green herbs underneath the
old tree.

And in my dream, methought, I went
To search out what might there be found ;

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And what the sweet bird's trouble meant,
That thus lay fluttering on the ground.
I went and peer'd, and could descry
No cause for her distressful cry;
But yet for her dear lady's sake
I stoop'd, methought the dove to take,
When lo! I saw a bright green snake
Coil'd around its wings and neck.
Green as the herbs on which it couch'd,
Close by the dove's its head it crouch'd;
And with the dove it heaves and stirs,
Swelling its neck as she swell'd hers!
I woke; it was the midnight hour,
The clock was echoing in the tower;
But tho' my slumber was gone by,
This dream it would not pass away—
It seems to live upon my eye!
And thence I vow'd this self-same day,
With music strong and saintly song

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To wander thro' the forest bare,
Lest aught unholy loiter there.

Thus Bracy said: the Baron, the while,
Half-listening heard him with a smile;
Then turn'd to Lady Geraldine,
His eyes made up of wonder and love;
And said in courtly accents fine,
Sweet maid, Lord Roland's beauteous dove,
With arms more strong than harp or song,
Thy sire and I will crush the snake!
He kiss'd her forehead as he spake,
And Geraldine in maiden wise,
Casting down her large bright eyes,
With blushing cheek and courtesy fine
She turn'd her from Sir Leoline;
Softly gathering up her train,
That o'er her right arm fell again;
And folded her arms across her chest,
And couch'd her head upon her breast,

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And look'd askance at Christabel——
Jesu, Maria, shield her well!

A snake's small eye blinks dull and shy,
And the lady's eyes they shrunk in her head,
Each shrunk up to a serpent's eye,
And with somewhat of malice, and more of dread
At Christabel she look'd askance!——
One moment—and the sight was fled!
But Christabel in dizzy trance,
Stumbling on the unsteady ground—
Shudder'd aloud, with a hissing sound;
And Geraldine again turn'd round,
And like a thing, that sought relief,
Full of wonder and full of grief,
She roll'd her large bright eyes divine
Wildly on Sir Leoline.

The maid, alas! her thoughts are gone,
She nothing sees—no sight but one!

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The maid, devoid of guile and sin,
I know not how, in fearful wise
So deeply had she drunken in
That look, those shrunken serpent eyes,
That all her features were resign'd
To this sole image in her mind:
And passively did imitate
That look of dull and treacherous hate.
And thus she stood, in dizzy trance,
Still picturing that look askance,
With forc'd unconscious sympathy
Full before her father's view——
As far as such a look could be,
In eyes so innocent and blue!

But when the trance was o'er, the maid
Paus'd awhile, and inly pray'd,
Then falling at her father's feet,
"By my mother's soul do I entreat

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"That thou this woman send away!"
She said; and more she could not say,
For what she knew she could not tell,
O'er-master'd by the mighty spell.

Why is thy cheek so wan and wild,
Sir Leoline? Thy only child
Lies at thy feet, thy joy, thy pride,
So fair, so innocent, so mild;
The same, for whom thy lady died!
O by the pangs of her dear mother
Think thou no evil of thy child!
For her, and thee, and for no other,
She pray'd the moment, ere she died;
Pray'd that the babe for whom she died,
Might prove her dear lord's joy and pride!
That prayer her deadly pangs beguil'd,
Sir Leoline!

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And would'st thou wrong thy only child,
Her child and thine?
Within the Baron's heart and brain
If thoughts, like these, had any share,
They only swell'd his rage and pain,
And did but work confusion there.
His heart was cleft with pain and rage,
His cheeks they quiver'd, his eyes were wild,
Dishonour'd thus in his old age;
Dishonour'd by his only child,
And all his hospitality
To th' insulted daughter of his friend
By more than woman's jealousy,
Brought thus to a disgraceful end —
He roll'd his eye with stern regard
Upon the gentle minstrel bard,
And said in tones abrupt, austere—
Why, Bracy! dost thou loiter here?

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I bade thee hence! The bard obey'd;
And turning from his own sweet maid,
The aged knight, Sir Leoline,
Led forth the lady Geraldine!

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THE CONCLUSION

TO

PART THE SECOND.

A little child, a limber elf,
Singing, dancing to itself,
A fairy thing with red round cheeks
That always finds, and never seeks,
Makes such a vision to the sight
As fills a father's eyes with light;
And pleasures flow in so thick and fast
Upon his heart, that he at last
Must needs express his love's excess
With words of unmeant bitterness.

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Perhaps 'tis pretty to force together
Thoughts so all unlike each other;
To mutter and mock a broken charm,
To dally with wrong that does no harm.
Perhaps 'tis tender too and pretty
At each wild word to feel within,
A sweet recoil of love and pity.
And what, if in a world of sin
(O sorrow and shame should this be true!)
Such giddiness of heart and brain
Comes seldom save from rage and pain,
So talks as it's most used to do.

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Kubla Khan:

OR

A VISION IN A DREAM.

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OF THE

FRAGMENT OF KUBLA KHAN.

THE following fragment is here published at the request of a poet of great and deserved celebrity, and as far as the Author's own opinions are concerned, rather as a psychological curiosity, than on the ground of any supposed *poetic* merits.

In the summer of the year 1797, the Author, then in ill health, had retired to a lonely farm-house between Porlock and Linton, on the Exmoor confines of Somerset and Devonshire. In

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consequence of a slight indisposition, an anodyne had been prescribed, from the effects of which he fell asleep in his chair at the moment that he was reading the following sentence, or words of the same substance, in "Purchas's Pilgrimage:" "Here the Khan Kubla commanded a palace to be built, and a stately garden thereunto. And thus ten miles of fertile ground were inclosed with a wall." The author continued for about three hours in a profound sleep, at least of the external senses, during which time he has the most vivid confidence, that he could not have composed less than from two to three hundred lines; if that indeed can be called composition in which all the images rose up before him as *things*, with a parallel production of the correspondent expressions, without any sensation or consciousness of effort. On awaking he appeared to himself to have a distinct recollection of the whole, and taking his pen, ink, and paper, instantly and eagerly wrote down the lines that are here preserved. At this

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moment he was unfortunately called out by a person on business from Porlock, and detained by him above an hour, and on his return to his room, found to his no small surprise and mortification, that though he still retained some vague and dim recollection of the general purpose of the vision, yet, with the exception of some eight or ten scattered lines and images, all the rest had passed away like the images on the surface of a stream into which a stone has been cast, but, alas! without the after restoration of the latter:

Then all the charm
Is broken—all that phantom-world so fair
Vanishes, and a thousand circlets spread,
And each mis-shape the other. Stay awhile,
Poor youth! who scarcely dar'st lift up thine eyes—
The stream will soon renew its smoothness, soon
The visions will return! And lo, he stays,
And soon the fragments dim of lovely forms
Come trembling back, unite, and now once more
The pool becomes a mirror.

Yet from the still surviving recollections in his

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mind, the Author has frequently purposed to finish for himself what had been originally, as it were, given to him. Σαμερον αδιον ασω: but the to-morrow is yet to come.

As a contrast to this vision, I have annexed a fragment of a very different character, describing with equal fidelity the dream of pain and disease.

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KUBLA KHAN.

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree:
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
  Down to a sunless sea.
So twice five miles of fertile ground
With walls and towers were girdled round;

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And here were gardens bright with sinuous rills
Where blossom'd many an incense-bearing tree;
And here were forests ancient as the hills,
And folding sunny spots of greenery.

But oh that deep romantic chasm which slanted
Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!
A savage place! as holy and inchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon-lover! [ing,
And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seeth-
As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,
A mighty fountain momently was forced:
Amid whose swift half-intermitted Burst
Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,
Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail:
And mid these dancing rocks at once and ever
It flung up momently the sacred river.

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Five miles meandering with a mazy motion
Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,
Then reached the caverns measureless to man,
And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean:
And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far
Ancestral voices prophesying war!

The shadow of the dome of pleasure
Floated midway on the waves;
Where was heard the mingled measure
From the fountain and the caves.
It was a miracle of rare device,
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!

A damsel with a dulcimer
In a vision once I saw:
It was an Abyssinian maid
And on her dulcimer she play'd,

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Singing of Mount Abora.
Could I revive within me
Her symphony and song,
To such a deep delight 'twould win me,
That with music loud and long,
I would build that dome in air,
That sunny dome! those caves of ice!
And all who heard should see them there,
And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread:
For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drank the milk of Paradise.

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The Pains of Sleep.

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THE PAINS OF SLEEP.

ERE on my bed my limbs I lay,
It hath not been my use to pray
With moving lips or bended knees;
But silently, by slow degrees,
My spirit I to Love compose,
In humble Trust mine eye-lids close,

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With reverential resignation,
No wish conceived, no thought expressed!
Only a *sense* of supplication,
A sense o'er all my soul imprest
That I am weak, yet not unblest,
Since in me, round me, every where
Eternal Strength and Wisdom are.

But yester-night I pray'd aloud
In anguish and in agony,
Up-starting from the fiendish crowd
Of shapes and thoughts that tortured me:
A lurid light, a trampling throng,
Sense of intolerable wrong,
And whom I scorn'd, those only strong!
Thirst of revenge, the powerless will
Still baffled, and yet burning still!
Desire with loathing strangely mixed
On wild or hateful objects fixed.

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Fantastic passions! mad'ning brawl!
And shame and terror over all!
Deeds to be hid which were not hid,
Which all confused I could not know,
Whether I suffered, or I did:
For all seemed guilt, remorse or woe,
My own or others still the same
Life-stifling fear, soul-stifling shame!

So two nights passed: the night's dismay
Sadden'd and stunn'd the coming day.
Sleep, the wide blessing, seemed to me
Distemper's worst calamity.
The third night, when my own loud scream
Had waked me from the fiendish dream,
O'ercome with sufferings strange and wild,
I wept as I had been a child;
And having thus by tears subdued
My anguish to a milder mood,

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Such punishments, I said, were due
To natures deepliest stain'd with sin:
For aye entempesting anew
Th'unfathomable hell within
The horror of their deeds to view,
To know and loathe, yet wish and do!
Such griefs with such men well agree,
But wherefore, wherefore fall on me?
To be beloved is all I need,
And whom I love, I love indeed.

London: Printed by W. Bulmer and Co.
Cleveland-row, St. James's.

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ZAPOLYA.

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ZAPOLYA:

A

CHRISTMAS TALE,

IN TWO PARTS:

The Prelude

ENTITLED

"THE USURPER'S FORTUNE;"

AND

The Sequel

ENTITLED

"THE USURPER'S FATE."

BY

S. T. COLERIDGE, Esq.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR REST FENNER, PATERNOSTER ROW.

1817.

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S. Curtis, Printer, Camberwell Press.

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THE form of the following dramatic poem is in humble imitation of the Winter's Tale of Shakespear, except that I have called the first part a Prelude instead of a first Act, as a somewhat nearer resemblance to the plan of the ancients, of which one specimen is left us in the Æschylian Trilogy of the Agamemnon, the Orestes, and the Eumenides. Though a matter of form *merely, yet two plays, on different periods of the same tale, might seem less bold, than an interval of twenty years between a first and second act. This is, however, in mere obedience to custom. The effect does not, in reality, at all depend on the* Time *of the interval; but on a very different principle. There are cases in which an interval of twenty hours between the acts would have a worse effect* (i. e. *render the imagination less disposed to take the position required) than twenty years in other cases. For the rest, I shall be well content if my readers will take it up, read and judge it, as a Christmas tale.*

S. T. COLERIDGE.

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CHARACTERS.

Men.

EMERICK, ... *Usurping King of Illyria.*
RAAB KIUPRILI, ... *An Illyrian Chieftain.*
CASIMIR, ... *Son of Kiuprili.*
CHEF RAGOZZI, ... *A Military Commander.*

Women.

ZAPOLYA, ... *Queen of Illyria.*

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ZAPOLYA.

SCENE I.

Front of a Palace with a magnificent Colonade. On one side a military Guard-house. Sentries pacing backward and forward before the Palace. CHEF RAGOZZI, *at the door of the Guard-house, as looking forwards at some object in the distance.*

CH. RAG. MY eyes deceive me not, it must be he.
Who but our chief, my more than father, who
But Raab Kiuprili moves with *such* a gait?
Lo! e'en this eager and unwonted haste
But agitates, not quells, its majesty.
My patron! my commander! yes, 'tis he!
Call out the guards. The Lord Kiuprili comes.

Drums beat, &c. the Guard turns out. Enter RAAB KIUPRILI.

R. KIUP. (*Making a signal to stop the Drums, &c.*)
Silence! enough! This is no time, young friend!
For ceremonious dues. The summoning drum,
Th' air-shattering trumpet, and the horseman's clatter,
Are insults to a dying sovereign's ear.
Soldiers, 'tis well! Retire! your General greets you,
His loyal fellow-warriors. [*Guards retire.*

CH. RAG. Pardon my surprise.
Thus sudden from the camp, and unattended!
What may these wonders prophecy?

R. KIUP. Tell me first,
How fares the king? His majesty still lives?

CH. RAG. We know no otherwise; but Emerick's friends
(And none but they approach him) scoff at hope.

R. KIUP. Ragozzi! I have rear'd thee from a child,
And *as* a child have rear'd thee. Whence this air
Of mystery? That face was wont to open
Clear, as the morning on me, shewing all things.
Hide nothing from me.

CH. RAG. O most lov'd, most honor'd,
The mystery, that struggles in my looks,

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Betray'd my whole tale to thee, if it told thee
That I am ignorant; but fear the worst.
And mystery is contagious. All things here
Are full of motion: and yet all is silent:
And bad mens' hopes infect the good with fears.

R. KIUP. (*His hand to his heart.*) I have trembling proof within, how true thou speak'st.

CH. RAG. That the prince Emerick feasts the soldiery,
Gives splendid arms, pays the commander's debts,
And (it is whisper'd) by sworn promises
Makes himself debtor—hearing this, thou hast heard
All————(*then in a subdued and saddened voice.*)
But what my Lord will learn too soon himself.

R. KIUP. Ha?—Well then, let it come! Worse scarce can come.
This letter written by the trembling hand
Of royal ANDREAS calls me from the camp
To his immediate presence. It appoints me,
The Queen, and Emerick, guardians of the realm,
And of the royal infant. Day by day,
Robb'd of ZAPOLYA'S soothing cares, the king
Yearns only to behold one precious boon,
And with his life breathe forth a father's blessing.

CH. RAG. Remember you, my Lord! that Hebrew leech,
Whose face so much distemper'd you?
R. KIUP. Barzoni?
I held him for a spy; but the proof failing
(More courteously, I own, than pleased myself)
I sent him from the camp.
CH. RAG. To him in chief
Prince Emerick trusts his royal brother's health.
R. KIUP. Hide nothing, I conjure you! What of him?
CH. RAG. With pomp of words beyond a soldier's cunning,
And shrugs and wrinkled brow, he smiles and whispers;
Talks in dark words of women's fancies; hints
That 'twere a useless and a cruel zeal
To rob a dying man of any hope,
However vain, that soothes him: and, in fine,
Denies all chance of offspring from the Queen.
R. KIUP. The venemous snake! My heel was on its head,
And (fool!) I did not crush it!
CH. RAG. Nay, he fears,
Zapolya will not long survive her husband.

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R. KIUP. Manifest treason! Ev'n this brief delay
Half makes me an accomplice——(If he live,)

[*Is moving toward the Palace.*

If he but live and know me, all may ——

CH. RAG. Halt! [*Stops him.*

On pain of death, my Lord! am I commanded
To stop all ingress to the palace.

R. KIUP. Thou!

CH. RAG. No Place, no Name, no Rank excepted—

R. KIUP. Thou!

CH. RAG. This life of mine, O take it, Lord Kiuprili!
I give it as a weapon to *thy* hands,
Mine own no longer. Guardian of Illyria,
Useless to thee 'tis worthless to myself.
Thou art the framer of my nobler being:
Nor does there live one virtue in my soul,
One honorable hope, but calls thee father.
Yet ere thou dost resolve, know that yon palace,
Is guarded from within, that each access
Is throng'd by arm'd conspirators, watch'd by ruffians
Pamper'd with gifts, and hot upon the spoil
Which that false promiser still trails before them.

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I ask but this one boon—reserve my life
Till I can lose it for the realm and thee!

R. KIUP. My heart is rent asunder. O my country,
O fall'n Illyria, stand I here spell-bound?
Did my King love me? Did I earn his love?
Have we embrac'd as brothers would embrace?
Was I his Arm, his Thunder-bolt? And now
Must I, hag-ridden, pant as in a dream?
Or, like an eagle, whose strong wings press up
Against a coiling serpent's folds, can I
Strike but for mockery, and with restless beak
Gore my own breast?—Ragozzi, thou art faithful?

CH. RAG. Here before Heaven I dedicate my faith
To the royal line of Andreas.

R. KIUP. Hark, Ragozzi!
Guilt is a timorous thing ere perpetration:
Despair alone makes wicked men be bold.
Come thou with me! They have heard my voice in flight,
Have fac'd round, terror-struck, and fear'd no longer
The whistling javelins of their fell pursuers.
Ha! what is this?

[*Black Flag displayed from the Tower of the Palace: a Death-bell tolls, &c.*

Vengeance of Heaven! He is dead.

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CH. RAG. At length then 'tis announced. Alas! I fear,
That these black death flags are but treason's signals.

R. KIUP. (*Looking forwards anxiously.*) A prophecy too soon fulfill'd! See yonder!
O rank and ravenous wolves! the death-bell echoes
Still in the doleful air—and see! they come.

CH. RAG. Precise and faithful in their villainy
Ev'n to the moment, that the master traitor
Had pre-ordained them.

R. KIUP. Was it over haste,
Or is it scorn, that in this race of treason
Their guilt thus drops its mask, and blazons forth
Their infamous plot ev'n to an ideot's sense.

CH. RAG. Doubtless they deem Heaven too usurp'd!
Heaven's justice
Bought like themselves!

[*During this conversation music is heard, first solemn and funeral, and then changing to spirited and triumphal.*

Being equal all in crime
Do you press on, ye spotted parricides!
For the one sole pre-eminence yet doubtful,
The prize of foremost impudence in guilt?

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R. KIUP. The bad man's cunning still prepares the way
For its own outwitting. I applaud, Ragozzi!
[*musing to himself—then*
Ragozzi! I applaud,
In thee, the virtuous hope that dares look onward
And keeps the life-spark warm of future action
Beneath the cloak of patient sufferance.
Act and appear, as time and prudence prompt thee:
I shall not misconceive the part, thou play'st.
Mine is an easier part—to brave th' Usurper.

Enter a procession of EMERICK'S *Adherents, Nobles, Chieftains, and Soldiers, with Music. They advance toward the front of the Stage.* KIUPRILI *makes the signal for them to stop.—The Music ceases.*

LEADER OF THE PROCESSION. The Lord Kiuprili!—
Welcome from the camp.

R. KIUP. Grave magistrates and chieftains of Illyria,
In good time come ye hither, if ye come
As loyal men with honourable purpose
To mourn what can alone be mourn'd; but chiefly
T' inforce the last commands of royal Andreas

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And shield the Queen, Zapolya: haply making
The mother's joy light up the widow's tears.

LEAD. Our purpose demands speed. Grace our procession:
A warrior best will greet a warlike king.

R. KIUP. This patent written by your *lawful* king,
(Lo! his own seal and signature attesting)
Appoints as guardians of his realm and offspring
The Queen, and the Prince Emerick, and myself.

[*Voices of Live King Emerick! an Emerick! an Emerick!*

What means this clamour? Are these madmen's voices?
Or is some knot of riotous slanderers leagued
To infamize the name of the king's brother
With a lie black as Hell? unmanly cruelty,
Ingratitude, and most unnatural treason? [*murmurs.*
What mean these murmurs? Dare then any here
Proclaim Prince Emerick a spotted traitor?
One that has taken from you your sworn faith,
And given you in return a Judas' bribe,
Infamy now, oppression in reversion,
And Heaven's inevitable curse hereafter?

[*Loud murmurs, followed by cries—Emerick! No Baby Prince! No changelings!*

Yet bear with me awhile! Have I for this

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Bled for your safety, conquer'd for your honour?
Was it for this, Illyrians! that I forded
Your thaw-swoln torrents, when the shouldering ice
Fought with the foe, and stain'd its jagged points
With gore from wounds, I felt not? Did the blast
Beat on this body, frost-and-famine-numb'd,
Till my hard flesh distinguish'd not itself
From the insensate mail, its fellow warrior?
And have I brought home with me VICTORY,
And with her, hand in hand, firm-footed PEACE,
Her countenance twice lighted up with glory,
As if I had charm'd a goddess down from Heaven?
But these will flee abhorrent from the throne
Of usurpation!

[*Murmurs increase—and cries of onward! onward!*

Have you then thrown off shame,
And shall not a dear friend, a loyal subject,
Throw off all fear? I tell ye, the fair trophies
Valiantly wrested from a valiant foe,
Love's natural offerings to a rightful king,
Will hang as ill on this usurping traitor,
This brother-blight, this Emerick, as robes
Of gold pluck'd from the images of gods
Upon a sacrilegious robber's back.

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During the last four lines, enter LORD CASIMIR, *with expressions of anger and alarm.*

CASIM. Who is this factious insolent, that dares brand
The elected King, our chosen Emerick?
[*Starts—then approaching with timid respect.*
My father!

R. KIUP. (*turning away*) Casimir! He, he a traitor!
Too soon indeed, Ragozzi! have I learnt it. [*aside.*

CASIM. (*with reverence.*)
My father and my lord!

KIUP. I know thee not!

LEAD. Yet the remembrancing did sound right filial.

KIUP. A holy name and words of natural duty
Are blasted by a thankless traitor's utterance.

CASIM. O hear me, Sire! not lightly have I sworn
Homage to Emerick. Illyria's sceptre
Demands a manly hand, a warrior's grasp.
The queen Zapolya's self-expected offspring
At least is doubtful: and of all our nobles,
The king, inheriting his brother's heart,
Hath honor'd us the most. *Your* rank, my lord!
Already eminent, is—all it can be—

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Confirm'd: and me the king's grace hath appointed
Chief of his council and the lord high steward.

KIUP. (Bought by a bribe!) I know thee now still less.

CASIM. (*struggling with his passion.*)
So much of Raab Kiuprili's blood flows here,
That no power, save that holy name of father,
Could shield the man who so dishonor'd me.

KIUP. The son of Raab Kiuprili a bought bond-slave,
Guilt's pander, treason's mouth-piece, a gay parrot,
School'd to shrill forth his feeder's usurp'd titles,
And scream, long live king Emerick!

LEADERS. Aye, king Emerick!
Stand back, my lord! Lead us, or let us pass.

SOLDIER. Nay, let the general speak!

SOLDIERS. Hear him! Hear him!

KIUP. Hear me,
Assembled lords and warriors of Illyria,
Hear, and avenge me! Twice ten years have I
Stood in your presence, honor'd by the king:
Belov'd and trusted. Is there one among you,
Accuses Raab Kiuprili of a bribe?
Or one false whisper in his sov'reign's ear?

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Who here dares charge me with an orphan's rights
Outfac'd, or widow's plea left undefended?
And shall I now be branded by a traitor,
A bought brib'd wretch, who, being call'd *my* son,
Doth libel a chaste matron's name, and plant
Hensbane and aconite on a mother's grave?
The underling accomplice of a robber,
That from a widow and a widow's offspring
Would steal their heritage? To God a rebel,
And to the common father of his country
A recreant ingrate!

CASIM. Sire! your words grow dangerous.
High-flown romantic fancies ill-beseem
Your age and wisdom. 'Tis a statesman's virtue,
To guard his country's safety by what means
It best may be protected—come what will
Of these monk's morals!

KIUP. (*aside.*) Ha! the elder Brutus
Made his soul iron, tho' *his* sons repented.
They BOASTED not *their* baseness.
(*Starts, and draws his sword.*)
Infamous changeling!
Recant this instant, and swear loyalty,
And strict obedience to thy sov'reign's will;

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Or, by the spirit of departed Andreas,
Thou diest——

[*Chiefs, &c. rush to interpose; during the tumult enter,* EMERICK, *alarmed.*

EMER. Call out the guard! Ragozzi! seize the assassin.——

Kiuprili? Ha!——(*with lower'd voice, at the same time with one hand making signs to the guard to retire.*)——
Pass on, friends! to the palace.

[*Music recommences.—The Procession passes into the Palace.—During which time* EMERICK *and* KIUPRILI *regard each other stedfastly.*

EMER. What? Raab Kiuprili? What? a father's sword
Against his own son's breast?

KIUP. 'Twould best excuse him,
Were he *thy* son, Prince Emerick. *I* abjure him.

EMER. This is my thank, then, that I have commenc'd
A reign to which the free voice of the nobles
Hath call'd me, and the people, by regards
Of love and grace to Raab Kiuprili's house?

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KIUP. What right hadst thou, Prince Emerick, to bestow them?

EMER. By what right dares Kiuprili question me?

KIUP. By a right common to all loyal subjects—
To *me* a duty! As the realm's co-regent
Appointed by our sov'reign's last free act,
Writ by himself.—(*Grasping the patent.*)

EMER. (*With a contemptuous sneer.*)
Aye!—Writ in a delirium!

KIUP. I likewise ask, by whose authority
The access to the sov'reign was refused me?

EMER. By whose authority dar'd the general leave
His camp and army, like a fugitive?

KIUP. A fugitive, who, with victory for his comrade,
Ran, open-eyed, upon the face of death!
A fugitive, with no other fear, than bodements
To be belated in a loyal purpose—
At the command, Prince! of *my* king and thine,
Hither I came; and now again require
Audience of Queen Zapolya; and (the States
Forthwith conven'd) that thou dost shew at large,
On what ground of defect thou 'st dar'd annul

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This thy king's last and solemn act—hast dar'd
Ascend the throne, of which the law had nam'd,
And conscience should have made thee, a protector.

EMER. A sov'reign's ear ill brooks a subject's questioning!

Yet for thy past well-doing—and because
'Tis hard to erase at once the fond belief
Long cherish'd, that Illyria had in thee
No dreaming priest's slave, but a Roman lover
Of her true weal and freedom—and for this, too,
That, hoping to call forth to the broad day-light
And fostering breeze of glory all deservings,
I still had placed *thee* foremost.[1]

KIUP. Prince! I listen.

EMER. Unwillingly I tell thee, that Zapolya,
Madden'd with grief, her erring hopes prov'd idle—

CASIM. Sire! speak the whole truth! Say, her *frauds* detected!

EMER. According to the sworn attests in council
Of her physician——

KIUP. (*Aside.*) Yes! the Jew, Barzoni!

EMER. Under the imminent risk of death she lies,
Or irrecoverable loss of reason,
If known friend's face or voice renew the frenzy.

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CASIM. (*To Kiuprili.*) Trust me, my lord! a woman's trick has duped you—
Us too—but most of all, the sainted Andreas.
Ev'n for his own fair fame, his grace prays hourly
For her recovery, that (the States convened)
She may take council of her friends.

EMER. Right, Casimir!
Receive my pledge, lord general. It shall stand
In her own will to appear and voice her claims;
Or, (which in truth I hold the wiser course)
With all the past pass'd by, as family quarrels,
Let the Queen Dowager, with unblench'd honors,
Resume her state, our first Illyrian matron.

KIUP. Prince Emerick! you *speak* fairly, and your pledge too
Is such, as well would suit an honest meaning.

CASIM. My lord! you scarce know half his grace's goodness.
The wealthy heiress, high-born fair Sarolta,
Bred in the convent of our noble ladies,
Her relative, the venerable abbess,
Hath, at his grace's urgence, woo'd and won for me.

EMER. Long may the race, and long may that name flourish,

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Which your heroic deeds, brave chief, have rendered
Dear and illustrious to all true Illyrians.

KIUP. (*Sternly.*)

The longest line, that ever tracing herald
Or found or feign'd, placed by a beggar's soul
Hath but a mushroom's date in the comparison:
And with the soul, the conscience is co-eval,
Yea, the soul's essence.

EMER. Conscience, good my lord,
Is but the pulse of reason. Is it conscience,
That a free nation should be handed down,
Like the dull clods beneath our feet, by chance
And the blind law of lineage? That whether infant,
Or man matur'd, a wise man or an ideot,
Hero or natural coward, shall have guidance
Of a free people's destiny, should fall out
In the mere lottery of a reckless nature,
Where few the prizes and the blanks are countless?
Or haply that a nation's fate should hang
On the bald accident of a midwife's handling
The unclos'd sutures of an infant's skull?

CASIM. What better claim can sov'reign wish or need,
Than the free voice of men who love their country?

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Those chiefly who have fought for 't? Who by right
Claim for their monarch one who having obey'd
So hath best learnt to govern: who, having suffer'd,
Can feel for each brave sufferer and reward him?
Whence sprang the name of Emperor? Was it not
By nature's fiat? In the storm of triumph,
'Mid warriors' shouts, did her oracular voice
Make itself heard: Let the commanding spirit
Possess the station of command!

KIUP. Prince Emerick,
Your cause will prosper best in your own pleading.

EMER. (*Aside to Casimir.*)
Ragozzi was thy school-mate—a bold spirit!
Bind him to us!—Thy Father thaws apace!
(*then aloud.*)
Leave us awhile, my Lord!—Your friend, Ragozzi!
Whom you have not yet seen since his return,
Commands the guard to day.

[*Casimir retires to the Guard-house; and after a time appears before it with Chef Ragozzi.*

We are alone.
What further pledge or proof desires Kiuprili?
Then, with your assent———

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KIUP. Mistake not for assent
The unquiet silence of a stern Resolve
Throttling th' impatient voice. I have heard thee, Prince!
And I have watch'd thee, too; but have small faith in
A plausible tale told with a flitting eye.
(*Emerick turns as about to call for the Guard.*)
In the next moment I am in thy power,
In this thou art in mine. Stir but a step,
Or make one sign—I swear by this good sword,
Thou diest that instant.

EMER. Ha, ha!—Well, Sir!—Conclude your Homily.

KIUP. (*In a somewhat suppressed voice.*)
A tale which, whether true or false, comes guarded
Against all means of proof, detects itself.
The Queen mew'd up—this too from anxious care
And love brought forth of a sudden, a twin birth
With thy discovery of her plot to rob thee
Of a rightful throne!—Mark how the scorpion, falsehood,
Coils round in its perplexity, and fixes
Its sting in its own head?

EMER. Aye! to the mark!

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KIUP. (*Aloud: he and Emerick standing at equidistance from the Palace and the Guard-House.*)
Had'st thou believ'd thine own tale, hadst thou *fancied*
Thyself the rightful successor of Andreas,
Would'st thou have pilfer'd from our school-boys' themes
These shallow sophisms of a *popular choice?*
What people? How convened? or, if convened,
Must not the magic power that charms together
Millions of men in council, needs have power
To win or wield them? Better, O far better
Shout forth thy titles to yon circling mountains
And with a thousand-fold reverberation
Make the rocks flatter thee, and the volleying air,
Unbribed, shout back to thee, King Emerick!
By wholesome laws t' imbank the sov'reign power,
To deepen by restraint, and by prevention
Of lawless will t' amass and guide the flood
In its majestic channel, is man's task
And the true patriot's glory! In all else
Men safelier trust to Heaven, than to themselves
When least themselves in the mad whirl of crowds
Where folly is contagious, and too oft
Even wise men leave their better sense at home
To chide and wonder at them when return'd."

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EMER. (*Aloud.*)
Is't thus, thou scoff'st the people? most of all,
The soldiers, the defenders of the people?
KRUP. (*Aloud.*)
O most of all, most miserable nation,
For whom the Imperial power, enormous bubble!
Is blown and kept aloft, or burst and shatter'd
By the bribed breath of a lewd soldiery!
Chiefly of such, as from the frontiers far,
(Which is the noblest station of true warriors)
In rank licentious idleness beleaguer
City and Court, a venom'd thorn i' the side
Of virtuous kings, the tyrant's slave and tyrant,
Still ravening for fresh largess! But with such
What title claim'st thou, save thy birth? What merits
Which many a liegeman may not plead as well,
Brave tho' I grant thee? If a life outlabor'd
Head, heart, and fortunate arm, in watch and war,
For the land's fame and weal; if large acquests,
Made honest by the aggression of the foe
And whose best praise is, that they bring us safety;
If victory, doubly-wreath'd, whose under-garland
Of laurel-leaves looks greener and more sparkling
Thro' the grey olive-branch; if these, Prince Emerick!

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Give the true title to the throne, not *thou*—
No! (let Illyria, let the infidel enemy
Be judge and arbiter between us!) I,
I were the rightful sovereign!—

EMER. I have faith
That thou both think'st and hop'st it. Fair Zapolya,
A provident lady—

KRUP. Wretch beneath all answer!

EMER. Offers at once the royal bed and throne!

KIUP. To be a kingdom's bulwark, a king's glory,
Yet lov'd by both, and trusted, and trust-worthy,
Is more than to be king; but see! thy rage
Fights with thy fear. I will relieve thee! Ho!

[*To the Guard*]

EMER. Not for thy sword, but to entrap thee, ruffian!
Thus long I have listened.—Guard—ho! from the Palace.

[*The Guard post from the guard-house with Chef Ragozzi at their head, and then a number from the Palace—Chef Ragozzi demands Kiuprili's sword, and apprehends him.*

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CASIM. O agony! (*To Emerick*) Sire, hear me!
(*To Kiuprili, who turns from him.*)
Hear me, Father!

EMER. Take in arrest that traitor and assassin!
Who pleads for *his* life, strikes at mine, his sov'reign's.

KIUP. As the Co-regent of the Realm, I stand
Amenable to none save to the States
Met in due course of law. But ye are bond-slaves,
Yet witness ye that before God and man
I here impeach Lord Emerick of foul treason,
And on strong grounds attaint him with suspicion
Of murder—

EMER. Hence with the madman!

KIUP. Your Queen's murder,
The Royal orphan's murder: and to the death
Defy him, as a tyrant and usurper.

[*Hurried off by Ragozzi and the Guard.*

EMER. Ere twice the sun hath risen, by my sceptre
This insolence shall be avenged

CASIM. O banish him!
This infamy will crush me. O for my sake,
Banish him, my liege Lord!

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EMER. (*Scornfully.*) What? to the army?
Be calm, young friend! Nought shall be done in anger.
The child o'er-powers the man. In this emergence
I must take council for us both. Retire.

[*Exit Casimir in agitation.*

EMERICK *alone.* (*Looks at a Calendar.*)
The changeful planet, now in her decay,
Dips down at midnight, to be seen no more.
With her shall sink the enemies of Emerick,
Curst by the last look of the waning moon:
And my bright destiny, with sharpen'd horns,
Shall greet me fearless in the new-born crescent.

[*Exit.*

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Scene changes to another view, namely, the Back of the Palace—a Wooded Park, and Mountains.—Enter ZAPOLYA, *with an Infant in Arms.*

ZAPO. Hush, dear one! hush! My trembling arm disturbs thee!
Thou, the protector of the helpless! thou,
The widow's husband and the orphan's father,
Direct my steps! Ah whither? O send down
Thy angel to a houseless babe and mother,
Driven forth into the cruel wilderness!
Hush, sweet one! Thou art no Hagar's offspring: Thou art
The rightful heir of an anointed king!
What sounds are those? It is the vesper chaunt
Of laboring men returning to their home!
Their queen has no home! Hear me, heavenly Father!
And let this darkness——
Be as the shadow of thy outspread wings
To hide and shield us! Start'st thou in thy slumbers?
Thou can'st not dream of savage Emerick. Hush!
Betray not thy poor mother! For if they seize thee
I shall grow mad indeed, and they'll believe
Thy wicked uncle's lie. Ha! what? A soldier?

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[*She starts back—and Enter Chef Ragozzi.*

RAGOZ. Sure heaven befriends us. Well! he hath escaped!

O rare tune of a tyrant's promises
That can enchant the serpent treachery
From forth its lurking hole in the heart. "*Ragozzi!*
"*O brave Ragozzi! Count! Commander! What not?*"
And all this too for nothing! a poor nothing!
Merely to play the underling in the murder
Of my best friend Kiuprili! His own son—monstrous!
Tyrant! I owe thee thanks, and in good hour
Will I repay thee, for that thou thought'st *me* too
A serviceable villain. Could I now
But gain some sure intelligence of the queen:
Heaven bless and guard her!

ZAPO. *(Coming fearfully forward)* Art thou not Ragozzi?

RAGOZ. The Queen! Now then the miracle is full!

I see heaven's wisdom is an over-match
For the devil's cunning. This way, madam, haste!

ZAPO. Stay! Oh, no! Forgive me if I wrong thee!

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This is thy sov'reign's child: Oh, pity us,
And be not treacherous! (*Kneeling.*)

RAGOZ. (*Raising her*)—Madam! For mercy's sake!

ZAPOL. But tyrants have an hundred eyes and arms!

RAGOZ. Take courage, madam! 'Twere too horrible,
(I can not do't) to swear I'm not a monster!—
Scarce had I barr'd the door on Raab Kiuprili—

ZAPO. Kiuprili? How?

RAGOZ. There is not time to tell it.—
The tyrant call'd me to him, praised my zeal,
(And be assured I overtopt his cunning
And seem'd right zealous.) But time wastes: In fine,
Bids me dispatch my trustiest friends, as couriers
With letters to the army. The thought at once
Flash'd on me. I disguised my prisoner—

ZAPO. What Raab Kiuprili?

RAGOZ. Yes! my noble general!
I sent *him* off, with Emerick's own pacquet,
Haste, and post haste—Prepared to follow him——

ZAPO. Ah, how? Is it joy or fear? My limbs seem sinking!—

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RAGOZ. (*Supporting her.*)
Heaven still befriends us. I have left my charger,
A gentle beast and fleet, and my boy's mule,
One that can shoot a precipice like a bird,
Just where the wood begins to climb the mountains.
The course we'll thread will mock the tyrant's guesses,
Or scare the followers. Ere we reach the main road
The Lord Kiuprili will have sent a troop
To escort me. Oh, thrice happy when he finds
The treasure which I convoy!

ZAPO. One brief moment,
That praying for strength I may *have* strength. This babe,
Heaven's eye is on it, and its innocence
Is, as a prophet's prayer, strong and prevailing!
Through thee, dear babe, th' inspiring thought possessed me,
When the loud clamor rose, and all the palace
Emptied itself—(They sought my life, Ragozzi!)
Like a swift shadow gliding, I made way
To the deserted chamber of my lord.—
(*Then to the infant.*)
And thou did'st kiss thy father's lifeless lips,
And in thy helpless hand, sweet slumberer!

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Still clasp'st the signet of thy royalty.
As I removed the seal, the heavy arm
Dropt from the couch aslant, and the stiff finger
Seemed pointing at my feet. Provident Heaven!
Lo, I was standing on the secret door,
Which, through a long descent where all sound perishes,
Led out beyond the palace. Well I knew it ——
But *Andreas* framed it not! *He* was no tyrant!

RAGOZ. Haste madam! Let me take this precious burden!

[*He kneels as he takes the child.*

ZAPO. Take him? And if we be pursued, I charge thee,
Flee thou and leave me! Flee and save thy king! ——

[*Then as going off, she looks back on the palace.*

Thou tyrant's den, be call'd no more a palace!
The orphan's angel at the throne of heaven
Stands up against thee, and there hover o'er thee
A Queen's, a Mother's, and a Widow's curse.
Henceforth a dragon's haunt, fear and suspicion
Stand sentry at thy portals! Faith and honor,
Driven from the throne, shall leave the attainted nation:

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And, for the iniquity that houses in thee,
False glory, thirst of blood, and lust of ravine,
(Fateful conjunction of malignant planets)
Shall shoot their blastments on the land. The fathers
Henceforth shall have no joy in their young men,
And when they cry: *Lo! a male child is born!*
The mother shall make answer with a groan.
For bloody usurpation, like a vulture,
Shall clog its beak within Illyria's heart.
Remorseless slaves of a remorseless tyrant,
They shall be mock'd with *sounds* of liberty,
And liberty shall be proclaimed alone,
To thee, O Fire! O Pestilence! O Sword!
Till Vengeance hath her fill.—And thou, snatched hence,
(*Again to the infant.*) Poor friendless fugitive! with mother's wailing,
Offspring of Royal Andreas, shalt return
With trump and timbrel-clang, and popular shout
In triumph to the palace of thy fathers! [*Exeunt.*

END OF PRELUDE.

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ADDITIONAL CHARACTERS.

Men.

OLD BATHORY, ... *A Mountaineer.*

BETHLEN BATHORY, ... *The young Prince Andreas, supposed Son of Old Bathory.*

LORD RUDOLPH, ... *A Courtier, but friend to the Queen's party.*

LASKA, ... *Steward to Casimir, betrothed to Glycine.*

PESTALUTZ, ... *An Assassin, in Emerick's employ.*

Women.

LADY SAROLTA, ... *Wife of Lord Casimir.*

GLYCINE, ... *Orphan Daughter of Chef Ragozzi.*

Between the flight of the Queen, and the civil war which immediately followed, and in which Emerick remained the victor, a space of twenty years is supposed to have elapsed.

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Usurpation Ended;

OR,

SHE COMES AGAIN.

ACT. I.

SCENE I.

A Mountainous Country. BATHORY'S *Dwelling at the end of the Stage.* *Enter* LADY SAROLTA *and* GLYCINE.

GLY. WELL then! Our round of charity is finished.
Rest, Madam! You breath quick.

SAROL. "What tired Glycine?
No delicate court-dame, but a mountaineer
By choice no less than birth, I gladly use
The good strength, nature gave me."

GLY. That last cottage
Is built as if an eagle or a raven
Had chosen it for her nest.

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SAROL. So many are
The sufferings which no human aid can reach,
It needs must be a duty doubly sweet
To heal the few we can. Well! let us rest.

GLY. There? [*Pointing to* BATHORY'S *dwelling.*
SAROLTA *answering, points to where she then stands.*

SAROL. Here! For on this spot Lord Casimir
Took his last leave. On yonder mountain-ridge
I lost the misty image which so long
Lingered, or seemed at least to linger on it.

GLY. And what if even now, on that same ridge,
A speck should rise, and still enlarging, lengthening,
As it clomb downwards, shape itself at last
To a numerous cavalcade, and spurring foremost,
Who but Sarolta's own dear lord return'd
From his high embassy?

SAROL. Thou hast hit my thought!
All the long day, from yester-morn to evening,
The restless hope fluttered about my heart.
Oh we are querulous creatures! Little less
Than all things can suffice to make us happy;
And little more than nothing is enough
To discontent us.—Were he come, then should I

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Repine he had not arrived just one day earlier
To keep his birth-day here, in his own birth-place.
GLY. But our best sports belike, and gay processions
Would to my Lord have seemed but work-day sights
Compared with those, the royal court affords.
SAROL. I have small wish to see them. A spring morning
With its wild gladsome minstrelsy of birds,
And its bright jewelry of flowers and dew-drops
(Each orbed drop, an orb of glory in it)
Would put them all in eclipse. This sweet retirement
Lord Casimir's wish alone would have made sacred;
But, in good truth, his loving jealousy
Did but command, what I had else entreated.
GLY. And yet had I been born Lady Sarolta,
Been wedded to the noblest of the realm,
So beautiful besides, and yet so stately———
SAROL. Hush! Innocent flatterer!
GLY. Nay! to my poor fancy
The royal court would seem an earthly heaven,
Made for such stars to shine in, and be gracious.

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SAROL. So doth the ignorant distance still delude us!
Thy fancied heaven, dear girl, like that above thee,
In its mere self a cold, drear, colorless void,
Seen from below and in the large, becomes
The bright blue ether, and the seat of gods!
Well! but this broil that scared you from the dance?
And was not Laska there: he, your betrothed?

GLY. Yes, madam! he was there. So was the may-pole,
For we danced round it.

SAROL. Ah, Glycine! why,
Why did you then betroth yourself?

GLY. Because
My own dear lady wished it! 'twas *you* asked me!

SAROL. Yes, at my lord's request, but never wished
My poor affectionate girl, to see thee wretched.
Thou know'st not yet the duties of a wife.

GLY. Oh, yes! It is a wife's chief duty, madam!
To stand in awe of her husband, and obey him,
And, I am sure, I never shall see Laska
But I shall tremble.

SAROL. Not with fear, I think,

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For you still mock him. Bring a seat from the cottage!

(*Exit* GLYCINE *into the Cottage*, SAROLTA *continues her Speech looking after her.*)

Something above thy rank there hangs about thee,
And in thy countenance, thy voice, and motion,
Yea, e'en in thy simplicity, Glycine,
A fine and feminine grace, that makes me feel
More as a mother than a mistress to thee!
Thou art a soldier's orphan! that—the courage,
Which rising in thine eye, seems oft to give
A new soul to its gentleness, doth prove thee!
Thou art sprung too of no ignoble blood,
Or there's no faith in instinct!

[*Angry voices and clamour without, re-enter* GLYCINE.

GLY. Oh, madam! there's a party of your servants,
And my lord's steward, Laska, at their head,
Have come to search for old Bathory's son,
Bethlen, that brave young man! 'twas he, my lady,
That took our parts, and beat off the intruders,
And, in mere spite and malice, now they charge him
With bad words of Lord Casimir and the king.

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Pray don't believe them, madam! This way! This way!

Lady Sarolta's *here*. [*Calling without.*

SAROL. Be calm, Glycine.

Enter LASKA *and Servants with* OLD BATHORY.

LAS. (*to Bathory.*) We have no concern with you! What needs your presence?

BATH. What! Do you think I'll suffer my brave boy
To be slandered by a set of coward-ruffians,
And leave it to their malice,—yes, mere malice!—
To tell its own tale?

[LASKA *and Servants bow to* LADY SAROLTA.

SAROL. Laska! What may this mean?

LAS. (*pompously, as commencing a set speech.*)
Madam! and may it please your ladyship!
This old man's son, by name, Bethlen Bathory,
Stands charged, on weighty evidence, that he,
On yester-eve, being his lordship's birth-day,
Did traitorously defame Lord Casimir:
The lord high steward of the realm, moreover———

SAROL. Be brief! We know his titles!

LAS. And moreover

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Raved like a traitor at our liege King Emerick.
And furthermore, said witnesses make oath,
Led on the assault upon his lordship's servants;
Yea, insolently tore, from this, your huntsman,
His badge of livery of your noble house,
And trampled it in scorn.

SAROL. (*to the servants who offer to speak.*) You have had your spokesman!
Where is the young man thus accused?

BATH I know not:
But if no ill betide him on the mountains,
He will not long be absent!

SAROL. Thou art his father?

BATH. None ever with more reason prized a son;
Yet I hate falsehood more than I love him.
But more than one, now in my lady's presence,
Witness'd the affray, besides these men of malice;
And if I swerve from truth———

GLY. Yes! good old man!
My lady! pray believe him!

SAROL. Hush, Glycine!
Be silent I command you. [*Then to* BATHORY.
Speak! we hear you!

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BATH. My tale is brief. During our festive dance,
Your servants, the accusers of my son,
Offered gross insults, in unmanly sort,
To our village maidens. He, (could he do less?)
Rose in defence of outraged modesty,
And so persuasive did his cudgel prove,
(Your hectoring sparks so over brave to women
Are always cowards) that they soon took flight,
And now in mere revenge, like baffled boasters,
Have framed this tale, out of some hasty words
Which their own threats provoked.

SAROL. Old man! you talk
Too bluntly! Did your son owe no respect
To the livery of our house?

BATH. Even such respect
As the sheep's skin should gain for the hot wolf
That hath began to worry the poor lambs!

LAS. Old insolent ruffian!

GLY. Pardon! pardon, madam!
I saw the whole affray. The good old man
Means no offence, sweet lady!—You, yourself,
Laska! know well, that these men were the ruffians!

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Shame on you!

SAROL. (*speaks with affected anger.*) What! Glycine? Go, retire!

[*Exit* GLYCINE *mournfully.*

Be it then that these men faulted. Yet yourself,
Or better still belike the maidens' parents,
Might have complained to *us*. Was ever access
Denied you? Or free audience? Or are we
Weak and unfit to punish our own servants?

BATH. So then! So then! Heaven grant an old man patience!
And must the gard'ner leave his seedling plants,
Leave his young roses to the rooting swine
While he goes ask their master, if perchance
His leisure serve to scourge them from their ravage?

LASK. Ho! Take the rude clown from your lady's presence!
I will report her further will!

SAROL. Wait then,
Till thou hast learnt it! Fervent good old man!
Forgive me that, to try thee, I put on
A face of sterness, alien to my meaning!

[*Then speaks to the Servants.*

Hence! leave my presence! and you Laska! mark me!

Those rioters are no longer of my household!
If we but shake a dew-drop from a rose
In vain would we re-place it, and as vainly
Restore the tear of wounded modesty
To a maiden's eye familiarized to licence.—
But these men, Laska—

LASK. (*aside*) Yes now 'tis coming!

SAROL. Brutal aggressors first, then baffled dastards,
That they have sought to piece out their revenge
With a tale of words lur'd from the lips of anger
Stamps them most dangerous; and till I want
Fit means for wicked ends, we shall not need
Their services. Discharge them! You, Bathory!
Are henceforth of my household! I shall place you
Near my own person! When your son returns
Present him to us!

BATHO. Ha! what strangers* here?
What business have they in an old man's eye?
Your goodness, lady—and it came so sudden—
I can not—must not—let you be deceived.
I have yet another tale, but (*then to Sarolta aside.*)
not for all ears!

* Refers to the tear, which he feels starting in his eye. The following line was borrowed unconsciously from Mr. Wordsworth's Excursion.

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SAROL. I oft have passed your cottage, and still prais'd
Its beauty, and that trim orchard-plot, whose blossoms
The gusts of April shower'd aslant its thatch.
Come, you shall show it me! And, while you bid it
Farewell, be not ashamed that I should witness
The oil of gladness glittering on the water
Of an ebbing grief.

[*Bathory bowing, shows her into his cottage.*

LASK. (*alone*) Vexation! baffled! school'd!
Ho! Laska! wake! why? what can all this mean?
She sent away that cockatrice in anger!
Oh the false witch! It is too plain, she loves him.
And now, the old man near my lady's person,
She'll see this Bethlen hourly!

[*Laska flings himself into the seat. Glycine peeps in timidly.*

GLY. Laska! Laska!
Is my lady gone?

LASK. (*surlily.*) Gone.

GLY. Have you yet seen him?
Is he returned?

[*Laska starts up from his seat.*

Has the seat stung you, Laska?

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LASK. No, serpent! no; 'tis you that sting me; you!
What! you would cling to him again?
GLY. Whom?
LASK. Bethlen! Bethlen!
Yes; gaze as if your very eyes embraced him!
Ha! you forget the scene of yesterday!
Mute ere he came, but then—Out on your screams,
And your pretended fears!
GLY. *Your* fears, at least,
Were real, Laska! or your trembling limbs
And white cheeks play'd the hypocrites most vilely!
LASK. I fear! whom? what?
GLY. I know, what *I* should fear,
Were I in Laska's place.
LASK. What?
GLY. My own conscience
For having fed my jealousy and envy
With a plot, made out of other men's revenges,
Against a brave and innocent young man's life!
Yet, yet, pray tell me!
LASK. (*malignantly.*) You will know too soon.
GLY. Would I could find my lady! tho' she chid me—

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Yet this suspense—(*going.*)

LASK. Stop! stop! one question only—
I am quite calm—

GLY. Ay, as the old song says,
Calm as a tyger, valiant as a dove.
Nay now, I have marr'd the verse: well! this one question—

LASK. Are you not bound to me by your own promise?
And is it not as plain—

GLY. Halt! that 's two questions.

LASK. Pshaw! Is it not as plain as impudence,
That you're in love with this young swaggering beggar,
Bethlen Bathory? When he was accused,
Why pressed *you* forward? Why did *you* defend him?

GLY. Question meet question: that's a woman's privilege.
Why, Laska, did *you* urge Lord Casimir
To make my lady force that promise from me?

LASK. So then, you say, Lady Sarolta *forc'd* you?

GLY. Could I look up to her dear countenance,
And say her nay? As far back as I wot of,
All her commands were gracious, sweet requests.
How could it be then, but that her requests
Must needs have sounded to me as commands?

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And as for love, had I a score of loves,
I'd keep them all for my dear, kind, good mistress.

LASK. Not one for Bethlen?

GLY. Oh! that's a different thing.
To be sure he's brave, and handsome, and so pious
To his good old father. But for *loving* him—
Nay, *there*, indeed, you are mistaken, Laska!
Poor youth! I rather think I *grieve* for him;
For I sigh so deeply when I think of him!
And if I see him, the tears come in my eyes,
And my heart beats; and all because I dreamt
That the war-wolf* had gor'd him as he hunted
In the haunted forest!

LAS. You dare own all this?
Your lady will not warrant promise-breach.
Mine, pamper'd Miss! you shall be; and I'll make you
Grieve for him with a vengeance. Odd's, my fingers
Tingle already! (*makes threatening signs.*)

GLY. (*aside.*) Ha! Bethlen coming this way!

[*Glycine then cries out as if afraid of being beaten.*

Oh, save me! Save me! Pray don't kill me, Laska!

* For the best account of the War-wolf or Lycanthropus, see Drayton's *Moon-calf*, Chalmers' English Poets, Vol. IV. p. 133.

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Enter BETHLEN *in an Hunting Dress.*

BETH. What, beat a woman!

LASK. (*to Glycine.*) O you cockatrice!

BETH. Unmanly dastard, hold!

LASK. (*pompously.*) Do you chance to know
Who—I—am, Sir?—('Sdeath! how black he looks!)

BETH. I have started many strange beasts in my time,
But none less like a man, than this before me
That lifts his hand against a timid female.

LASK. Bold youth! she's mine.

GLY. No, not my master yet,
But only *is* to be; and all, because
Two years ago my lady asked me, and
I promised *her*, not *him*; and if *she'll* let me,
I'll *hate* you, my lord's steward.

BETH. Hush, Glycine!

GLY. Yes, I do, Bethlen; for he just now brought
False witnesses to swear away your life:
Your life, and old Bathory's too.

BETH. Bathory's!
Where is my father? Answer, or——Ha? gone!

[*Laska during this time slinks off the Stage, using threatening gestures to Glycine.*

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GLY. Oh, heed not *him!* I saw you pressing onward,
And did but feign alarm. Dear gallant youth,
It is *your* life, they seek!
BETH. My life?
GLY. Alas,
Lady Sarolta even—
BETH. She does not know me!
GLY. Oh that she did! she could not then have spoken
With such stern countenance. But though she spurn me,
I will kneel, Bethlen—
BETH. Not for me, Glycine!
What have I done? or whom have I offended?
GLY. Rash words, 'tis said, and treasonous of the king.
[*Bethlen mutters to himself indignantly.*
GLY. (*aside.*) So looks the statue, in our hall, o'the god,
The shaft just flown that kill'd the serpent!
BETH. (*muttering aside.*) King!
GLY. Ah, often have I wished *you* were a king.
You would protect the helpless every where,
As you did us. And I, too, should not then

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Grieve for you, Bethlen, as I do; nor have
The tears come in my eyes; nor dream bad dreams
That you were killed in the forest; and then Laska
Would have no right to rail at me, nor say
(Yes, the base man, he says,) that I—I love you.

BETH. Pretty Glycine! wer't thou not betrothed—
But in good truth I know not what I speak.
This luckless morning I have been so haunted
With my own fancies, starting up like omens,
That I feel like one, who waking from a dream
Both asks and answers wildly.—But Bathory?

GLY. Hist! 'tis my lady's step! She must not see you!

[*Bethlen retires.*

Enter from the Cottage SAROLTA *and* BATHORY.

SAROL. Go, seek your son! I need not add be speedy.
You here, Glycine? [*Exit Bathory.*

GLY. Pardon, pardon Madam!
If you but saw the old man's son, you would not,
You could not have him harm'd.

SAROL. Be calm, Glycine!

GLY. No, I shall break my heart. (*sobbing.*)

SAROL. (*taking her hand.*) Ha! is it so?
O strange and hidden power of sympathy,
That of like fates, though all unknown to each,
Dost make blind instincts, orphan's heart to orphan's
Drawing by dim disquiet!
GLY. Old Bathory—
SAROL. Seeks his brave son. Come, wipe away
thy tears.
Yes, in good truth, Glycine, this same Bethlen
Seems a most noble and deserving youth.
GLY. My lady does not mock me?
SAROL. Where is Laska?
Has he not told thee?
GLY. Nothing. In his fear—
Anger, I mean—stole off—I am so fluttered—
Left me abruptly—
SAROL. His shame excuses him!
He is somewhat hardly task'd; and in discharging
His own tools, cons a lesson for himself.
Bathory and the youth henceforward live
Safe in my lord's protection.
GLY. The Saints bless you!
Shame on my graceless heart! How dared I fear,
Lady Sarolta could be cruel?

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SAROL. Come,
Be yourself, girl!
GLY. O, 'tis so full *here!* (*at her heart.*)
And now it can not harm him if I tell you,
That the old man's son—
SAROL. Is *not* that old man's son!
A destiny, not unlike thine own, is his.
For all I know of *thee* is, that thou art
A soldier's orphan: left when rage intestine
Shook and engulph'd the pillars of Illyria.
This other fragment, thrown back by that same earthquake,
This, so mysteriously inscribed by nature,
Perchance may piece out and interpret thine.
Command thyself! Be secret! His true father——
Hear'st thou?
GLY. O tell—(*eagerly.*)
BETH. (*Who had overheard the last few words, now rushes out.*)
Yes, tell me, Shape from heaven!
Who is my father?
SAROL. (*Gazing with surprize.*) Thine? *Thy* father? Rise!
GLY. Alas! He hath alarmed you, my dear lady!

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SAROL. His countenance, not his act!

GLY. Rise, Bethlen! Rise!

BETH. No; kneel thou too! and with thy orphan's tongue
Plead for me! I am rooted to the earth
And have no power to rise! Give me a father!
There is a prayer in those uplifted eyes
That seeks high Heaven! But I will overtake it,
And bring it back, and make it plead for me
In thine own heart! Speak! Speak! Restore to me
A name in the world!

SAROL. By that blest Heaven I gaz'd at,
I know not who thou art. And if I knew,
Dared I ——But rise!

BETH. Blest spirits of my parents,
Ye hover o'er me now! Ye shine upon me!
And, like a flower that coils forth from a Ruin,
I feel and seek the light, I can not see!

SAROL. Thou see'st yon dim spot on the mountain's ridge,
But what it is thou know'st not. Even such
Is all I know of thee—haply, brave youth,
Is all, Fate makes it safe for thee to know!

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BETH. Safe? Safe? O let me then inherit danger,
And it shall be my birth-right!
SAROL. (*aside.*) That look again!—
The wood which first incloses, and then skirts
The highest track that leads across the mountains—
Thou know'st it, Bethlen?
BETH. Lady, 'twas my wont
To roam there in my childhood oft alone
And mutter to myself the name of father.
For still Bathory (why, till now I guess'd not)
Would never hear it from my lips, but sighing
Gaz'd upward. Yet of late an idle terror—
GLY. Madam, that wood is haunted by the war-wolves,
Vampires, and monstrous—
SAROL. (*with a smile.*) Moon-calves, credulous girl!
Haply some o'ergrown savage of the forest
Hath his lair there, and fear hath framed the rest.
[*Then speaking again to Bethlen.*
After that last great battle, (O young man!
Thou wakest anew my life's sole anguish) that
Which fixed Lord Emerick on his throne, Bathory
Led by a cry, far inward from the track,

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In the hollow of an oak, as in a nest,
Did find thee, Bethlen, then an helpless babe.
The robe, that wrapt thee, was a widow's mantle.

BETH. An infant's weakness doth relax my frame.
O say—I fear to ask—

SAROL. And I to tell thee.

BETH. Strike! O strike quickly! See, I do not shrink. (*striking his breast.*)
I am stone, cold stone.

SAROL. Hid in a brake hard by,
Scarce by both palms supported from the earth,
A wounded lady lay, whose life fast waning
Seemed to survive itself in her fixt eyes,
That strained towards the babe. At length one arm
Painfully from her own weight disengaging,
She pointed first to heaven, then from her bosom
Drew forth a golden casket. Thus entreated
Thy foster-father took thee in his arms,
And kneeling spake: If aught of this world's comfort
Can reach thy heart, receive a poor man's troth,
That at my life's risk I will save thy child!
Her countenance work'd, as one that seem'd preparing
A loud voice, but it died upon her lips
In a faint whisper, "Fly! Save him! Hide—hide all!"

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BETH. And did he leave her? What had I a mother?
And left her bleeding, dying? Bought I vile life
With the desertion of a dying mother?
Oh agony!

GLY. Alas! thou art bewildered,
And dost forget thou wer't an helpless infant!

BETH. What else can I remember, but a mother
Mangled and left to perish?

SAROL. Hush, Glycine!
It is the ground-swell of a teeming instinct:
Let it but lift itself to air and sunshine,
And it will find a mirror in the waters,
It now makes boil above it. Check him not!

BETH. O that I were diffused among the waters
That pierce into the secret depths of earth,
And find their way in darkness! Would that I
Could spread myself upon the homeless winds!
And I would seek her! for she is not dead!
She *can not* die! O pardon, gracious lady!
You were about to say, that he returned—

SAROL. Deep Love, the Godlike in us, still believes
Its objects as immortal as itself!

BETH. And found her still—

SAROL. Alas! he did return,

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He left no spot unsearch'd in all the forest.
But she (I trust me by some friendly hand)
Had been borne off.

BETH. O whither?

GLY. Dearest Bethlen!
I would that you could weep like me! O do not
Gaze so upon the air!

SAROL. (*continuing the story*) While he was absent
A friendly troop, 'tis certain, scoured the wood,
Hotly pursued indeed by Emerick.

BETH. Emerick!
Oh Hell!

GLY. (*to silence him*) Bethlen!

BETH. Hist! I'll curse him in a whisper!
This gracious lady must hear blessings only.
She hath not yet the glory round her head,
Nor those strong eagle wings, which made swift way
To that appointed place, which I must seek:
Or else *she* were my mother!

SAROL. Noble youth!
From me fear nothing! Long time have I owed
Offerings of expiation for misdeeds
Long passed that weigh me down, tho' innocent!
Thy foster-father hid the secret from thee,

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For he perceived thy thoughts, as they expanded,
Proud, restless, and ill-sorting with thy state!
Vain was his care! Thou 'st made thyself suspected
E'en where Suspicion reigns, and asks no proof
But its own fears! Great Nature hath endow'd thee
With her best gifts! From me thou shalt receive
All honorable aidance! But haste hence!
Travel will ripen thee, and enterprize
Beseems thy years! Be thou henceforth *my* soldier!
And whatsoe'er betide thee, still believe
That in each noble deed, achieved or suffered,
Thou solvest best the riddle of thy birth!
And may the light that streams from thine own honour
Guide thee to that, thou seekest!

GLY. Must he leave us?

BETH. And for such goodness can I return nothing,
But some hot tears that sting mine eyes? Some sighs
That if not breath'd would swell my heart to stifling?
May heaven and thine own virtues, high-born lady,
Be as a shield of fire, far, far aloof
To scare all evil from thee! Yet, if fate
Hath destined thee one doubtful hour of danger,
From the uttermost region of the earth, methinks,
Swift as a spirit invoked, I should be with thee!

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And then, perchance, I might have power t' unbosom
These thanks that struggle here. Eyes fair as thine
Have gazed on me with tears of love and anguish,
Which these eyes saw not, or beheld unconscious;
And tones of anxious fondness, passionate prayers,
Have been talk'd to me! But this tongue ne'er soothed
A mother's ear, lisping a mother's name!
O, at how dear a price have I been lov'd
And no love could return! One boon then, lady!
Where'er thou bid'st, I go thy faithful soldier,
But first must trace the spot, where she lay bleeding
Who gave me life. No more shall beast of ravine
Affront with baser spoil that sacred forest!
Or if avengers more than human haunt there,
Take they what shape they list, savage or heavenly,
They shall make answer to me, though my heart's blood
Should be the spell to bind them. Blood calls for blood!

[*Exit Bethlen.*

SAROL. Ah! it was this I fear'd. To ward off this
Did I with-hold from him that old Bathory
Returning hid beneath the self-same oak,
Where the babe lay, the mantle, and some jewel
Bound on his infant arm.

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GLY. Oh, let me fly
And stop him! Mangled limbs do there lie scattered
Till the lured eagle bears them to her nest.
And voices have been heard! And there the plant grows
That being eaten gives the inhuman wizard
Power to put on the fell Hyæna's shape.

SAROL. What idle tongue hath bewitch'd *thee*, Glycine?
I hoped that thou had'st learnt a nobler faith.

GLY. O, chide me not, dear lady; question Laska,
Or the old man.

SAROL. Forgive me, I spake harshly.
It is indeed a mighty sorcery
That doth enthrall thy young heart, my poor girl.
And what hath Laska told thee?

GLY. Three days past
A courier from the king did cross that wood;
A wilful man, that arm'd himself on purpose:
And never hath been heard of from that time!

(*Sound of horns without.*)

SAROL. Hark! dost thou hear it?

GLY. 'Tis the sound of horns!
Our huntsmen are not out!

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SAROL. Lord Casimir
Would not come thus! (*Horns again.*)
GLY. Still louder!
SAROL. Haste we hence!
For I believe in part thy tale of terror!
But, trust me, 'tis the inner man transform'd:
Beasts in the shape of men are worse than war-wolves.
(SAROLTA *and* GLYCINE *exeunt. Trumpets, &c. louder. Enter* EMERICK, Lord RUDOLPH LASKA, *and Huntsmen and Attendants.*)
RUD. A gallant chace, sire.
EMER. Aye, but this new quarry
That we last started seems worth all the rest.
[*Then to Laska.*
And you—excuse me—what's your name?
LASK. Whatever
Your majesty may please.
EMER. Nay, that's too late, man.
Say, what thy mother and thy godfather
Were pleased to call thee.
LASK. Laska, my liege sovereign.
EMER. Well, my liege subject Laska! And you are Lord Casimir's steward?
LASK. And your majesty's creature.

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EMER. *Two* gentle dames made off at our approach.
Which was your lady?

LASK. My liege lord, the taller.
The other, please your grace, is her poor handmaid,
Long since betrothed to me. But the maid's froward—
Yet would your grace but speak—

EMER. Hum, master steward!
I am honor'd with this sudden confidence.
Lead on. (*To Laska, then to Rudolph.*)
Lord Rudolph, you 'll announce our coming.
Greet fair Sarolta from me, and entreat her
To be our gentle hostess. Mark, you add
How much we grieve, that business of the state
Hath forced us to delay her lord's return.

RUD. (*aside.*) Lewd, ingrate tyrant! Yes, I will announce thee.

EMER. Now onward all. [*Exeunt attendants.*

EMERICK *solus.*

A fair one by my faith!
If her face rival but her gait and stature,
My good friend Casimir had *his* reasons too.
" *Her tender health, her vow of strict retirement,*
" *Made early in the convent—His word pledged—*"

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All fictions, all: fictions of jealousy.
Well! If the mountain move not to the prophet,
The prophet must to the mountain! In this Laska
There's somewhat of the knave mix'd up with dolt.
Through the transparence of the fool, methought,
I saw (as I could lay my finger on it)
The crocodile's eye, that peer'd up from the bottom.
This knave may do us service. Hot ambition
Won me the husband. Now let vanity
And the resentment for a forced seclusion
Decoy the wife! Let him be deem'd th' aggressor
Whose cunning and distrust began the game!

[*Exit.*

END OF ACT I.

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ACT II.

SCENE I.

A savage wood. At one side a cavern, overhung with ivy. ZAPOLYA *and* KIUPRILI *discovered: both, but especially the latter, in rude and savage garments.*

KIUP. Heard you then aught while I was slumbering?

ZAPO. Nothing.
Only your face became convulsed. We miserable!
Is heaven's last mercy fled? Is sleep grown treacherous?

KIUP. O for a sleep, for sleep itself to rest in!
I dreamt I had met with food beneath a tree
And I was seeking you, when all at once
My feet became entangled in a net:
Still more entangled as in rage I tore it,
At length I freed myself, had sight of you,
But as I hastened eagerly, again
I found my frame encumbered: A huge serpent
Twined round my chest, but tightest round my throat.

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ZAPO. Alas! 'twas lack of food: for hunger choaks!

KIUP. And now I saw you by a shrivelled child
Strangely pursued. You did not fly, yet neither
Touch'd you the ground methought, but close above it
Did seem to shoot yourself along the air,
And as you passed me, turn'd your face and shriek'd.

ZAPO. I did in truth send forth a feeble shriek,
Scarce knowing why. Perhaps the mock'd sense crav'd
To *hear* the scream, which you but seem'd to utter.
For your whole face look'd like a mask of torture!
Yet a child's image doth indeed pursue me
Shrivell'd with toil and penury!

KIUP. Nay! what ails you?

ZAPO. A wond'rous faintness there comes stealing o'er me.
Is it Death's lengthening shadow, who comes onward,
Life's setting sun behind him?

KIUP. Cheerly! The dusk
Will quickly shroud us. Ere the moon be up,
Trust me I'll bring thee food!

ZAPO. Hunger's tooth has
Gnawn itself blunt. O, I could queen it well
O'er my own sorrows as my rightful subjects.

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But wherefore, O revered Kiuprili! wherefore
Did my importunate prayers, my hopes and fancies,
Force thee from thy secure though sad retreat?
Would that my tongue had then cloven to my mouth!
But Heaven is just! With tears I conquered thee,
And not a tear is left me to repent with!
Had'st thou not done already—had'st thou not
Suffered—oh, more than e'er man feign'd of friendship?

KIUP. Yet be thou comforted! What! had'st thou faith
When I turn'd back incredulous? 'Twas thy light
That kindled mine. And shall it now go out,
And leave thy soul in darkness? Yet look up,
And think thou see'st thy sainted Lord commissioned
And on his way to aid us! Whence those late dreams,
Which after such long interval of hopeless
And silent resignation all at once
Night after night commanded thy return
Hither? and still presented in clear vision
This wood as in a scene? this very cavern?
Thou dar'st not doubt that Heaven's especial hand
Worked in those signs. The hour of thy deliverance
Is on the stroke:—for Misery can not add
Grief to thy griefs, or Patience to thy sufferance!

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ZAPO. Can not! Oh, what if thou were taken
from me?
Nay, thou said'st well: for that and death were one.
Life's grief is at its height indeed; the hard
Necessity of this inhuman state
Has made our deeds inhuman as our vestments.
Housed in this wild wood, with wild usages,
Danger our guest, and famine at our portal—
Wolf-like to prowl in the shepherd's fold by night;
At once for food and safety to affrighten
The traveller from his road—

(GLYCINE *is heard singing without.*)

KIUP. Hark! heard you not
A distant chaunt?

SONG, by GLYCINE.

A sunny shaft did I behold,
From sky to earth it slanted;
And poised there in a bird so bold—
Sweet bird, thou wert enchanted!

He sunk, he rose, he twinkled, he troll'd
Within that shaft of sunny mist;
His eyes of fire, his beak of gold,
All else of amethyst!

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And thus he sang: "Adieu! adieu!
Love's dreams prove seldom true.
Sweet month of May,
We must away;
Far, far away!
To day! to day!"

ZAPO. Sure 'tis some blest spirit!
For since thou slew'st the usurper's emissary
That plung'd upon us, a more than mortal fear
Is as a wall, that wards off the beleaguerer
And starves the poor besieged. (*Song again.*)

KIUP. It is a maiden's voice! quick to the cave!

ZAPO. Hark! her voice faulters!

[*Exit* ZAPOLYA.

KIUP. She must not enter
The cavern, else I will remain unseen!

(KIUP. *retires to one side of the stage.* GLYCINE *enters singing.*)

GLY. (*Fearfully.*)
A savage place! Saints shield me! Bethlen! Bethlen!
Not here?—There's no one here! I'll sing again.
(*Sings again.*)
If I do not hear my own voice, I shall fancy

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Voices in all chance sounds! (*Starts.*)
'Twas some dry branch
Dropt of itself! Oh, he went forth so rashly,
Took no food with him—only his arms and boar-spear!
What if I leave these cakes, this cruse of wine,
Here by this cave, and seek him with the rest?

KIUP. (*Unseen.*)
Leave them and flee!

GLY. (*Shrieks, then recovering.*) Where are you?

KIUP. (*Still unseen.*) Leave them!

GLY. 'Tis Glycine!
Speak to me Bethlen! speak in your own voice!
All silent!—If this were the war-wolf's den!
'Twas not his voice!—

(GLYCINE *leaves the provisions and exit fearfully.* KIUPRILI *comes forward, seizes them and carries them into the cavern.* GLYCINE *returns, having recovered herself.*)

GLY. Shame! Nothing hurt me!
If some fierce beast have gored him, he must needs
Speak with a strange voice. Wounds cause thirst and hoarseness!
Speak Bethlen! or but moan. St—St——No-Bethlen!

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If I turn back and he should be found dead here,

(*She creeps nearer and nearer to the cavern.*)

I should go mad!—Again!—'Twas my own heart!
Hush coward heart! better beat loud with fear,
Than break with shame and anguish!

(*As she approaches to enter the cavern,* KIUPRILI *stops her.* GLYCINE *shrieks.*)

Saints protect me!

KIUP. Swear then by all thy hopes, by all thy fears—

GLY. Save me!

KIUP. Swear secrecy and silence!

GLY. I swear!

KIUP. Tell what thou art, and what thou seekest?

GLY. Only
A harmless orphan youth, to bring him food—

KIUP. Wherefore in this wood?

GLY. Alas! it was his purpose—

KIUP. With what intention came he? Would'st thou save him,
Hide nothing!

GLY. Save him! O forgive his rashness!
He is good, and did not know that thou wert human!

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KIUP. (*Repeats the word.*) Human?
(*Then sternly.*)
With what design?

GLY. To kill thee, or
If that thou wert a spirit, to compel thee
By prayers, and with the shedding of his blood,
To make disclosure of his parentage.
But most of all—

ZAPO. (*Rushing out from the cavern.*)
Heaven's blessing on thee! Speak!

GLY. Whether his Mother live, or perished here!

ZAPO. Angel of Mercy, I was perishing
And thou did'st bring me food: and now thou bring'st
The sweet, sweet food of hope and consolation
To a mother's famish'd heart! His name, sweet maiden?

GLY. E'en till this morning we were wont to name him
Bethlen Bathory!

ZAPO. Even till this morning?
This morning? when my weak faith failed me wholly!
Pardon, O thou that portion'st out our sufferance,
And fill'st again the widow's empty cruse!
Say on!

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GLY. The false ones charged the valiant youth
With treasonous words of Emerick—
ZAPO. Ha! my son!
GLY. And of Lord Casimir—
KIUP. (*aside.*) O agony! *my* son!
GLY. But my dear lady—
ZAPO. and KIUP. Who?
GLY. Lady Sarolta
Frown'd and discharged these bad men.
KIUP. (*Turning off, and to himself.*) Righteous heaven
Sent me a daughter once, and I repined
That it was not a son. A son was given me.
My daughter died, and I scarce shed a tear:
And lo! that son became my curse and infamy.
ZAPO. (*Embraces* GLYCINE.)
Sweet innocent! and you came here to seek him,
And bring him food. Alas! thou fear'st?
GLY. Not much!
My own dear lady, when I was a child
Embraced me oft, but her heart never beat so.
For I too am an orphan, motherless!
KIUP. (*To* ZAPOLYA.)
O yet beware, lest hope's brief flash but deepen

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The after gloom, and make the darkness stormy!
In that last conflict, following our escape,
The usurper's cruelty had clog'd our flight
With many a babe, and many a childing mother.
This maid herself is one of numberless
Planks from the same vast wreck.

(*Then to* GLYCINE *again*)

Well! Casimir's wife—

GLY. She is always gracious, and so praised the old man
That his heart o'erflow'd, and made discovery
That in this wood—

ZAPO. (*In agitation.*) O speak!

GLY. A wounded lady—

(ZAPOLYA *faints—they both support her.*)

GLY. Is this his mother?

KIUP. She would fain believe it,
Weak tho' the proofs be. Hope draws towards itself
The flame with which it kindles.

(*Horn heard without.*)

To the cavern!
Quick! quick!

GLY. Perchance some huntsmen of the king's.

KIUP. Emerick?

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GLY. He came this morning—

(*They retire to the cavern, bearing* ZAPOLYA. *Then enter* BETHLEN *armed with a boar-spear.*)

BETH. I had a glimpse
Of some fierce shape: and but that Fancy often
Is Nature's intermeddler, and cries halves
With the outward sight, I should believe I saw it
Bear off some human prey. O my preserver!
Bathory! Father! Yes, thou deserv'st that name!
Thou did'st not mock me! These are blessed findings!
The secret cypher of my destiny
(*Looking at his signet.*)
Stands here inscribed: it is the seal of fate!
Ha!—(*Observing the cave.*) Had ever monster fitting
lair, 'tis yonder!
Thou yawning Den, I well remember thee!
Mine eyes deceived me not. Heaven leads me on!
Now for a blast, loud as a king's defiance,
To rouse the monster couchant o'er his ravine!
(*Blows the horn—then a pause.*)
Another blast! and with another swell
To you, ye charmed watchers of this wood!
If haply I have come, the rightful heir

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Of vengeance: if in me survive the spirits
Of those, whose guiltless blood flow'd streaming here!
(*Blows again louder.*)
Still silent? Is the monster gorged? Heaven shield me!
Thou, faithful spear! be both my torch and guide.
(*As* BETHLEN *is about to enter,* KIUPRILI *speaks from the cavern unseen.*)

KIUP. Withdraw thy foot! Retract thine idle spear
And wait obedient!

BETH. (*In amazement.*) Ha! What art thou? speak!

KIUP. Avengers!—(*Still unseen.*)

BETH. By a dying mother's pangs
E'en such am I. Receive me!

KIUP. (*Still unseen.*) Wait! Beware!
At thy first step, thou tread'st upon the light,
Thenceforth must darkling flow, and sink in darkness!

BETH. Ha! see my boar-spear trembles like a reed!—
Oh, fool! mine eyes are duped by my own shuddering.—
Those piled thoughts, built up in solitude,
Year following year, that pressed upon my heart
As on the altar of some unknown God,
Then, as if touch'd by fire from heaven descending,

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Blazed up within me at a father's name—
Do they desert me now?—at my last trial?
VOICE of command! and thou, O hidden LIGHT!
I have obeyed! Declare ye by what name
I dare invoke you! Tell what sacrifice
Will make you gracious.

KIUP. (*Still unseen.*) Patience! Truth! Obedience!

Be thy whole soul transparent! so the Light,
Thou seekest, may enshrine itself within thee!
Thy name?

BETH. Ask rather the poor roaming savage,
Whose infancy no holy rite had blest.
To him, perchance, rude spoil or ghastly trophy,
In chase or battle won, have given a name.
I have none—but like a dog have answered
To the chance sound which he that fed me, called me!

KIUP. (*Still unseen.*)
Thy birth-place?

BETH. Deluding spirits! Do ye mock me?
Question the Night! Bid Darkness tell its birth-place?
Yet hear! Within yon old oak's hollow trunk,
Where the bats cling, have I survey'd my cradle!
The mother-falcon hath her nest above it,

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And in it the wolf litters!——I invoke you,
Tell me, ye secret ones! if ye beheld me
As I stood there, like one who having delved
For hidden gold hath found a talisman,
O tell! what rights, what offices of duty
This signet doth command? What rebel spirits
Owe homage to it's Lord?

KIUP. (*Still unseen.*) More, guiltier, mightier,
Than thou may'st summon! Wait the destined hour!

BETH. O yet again, and with more clamorous prayer,
I importune ye! Mock me no more with shadows!
This sable mantle—tell, dread voice! did this
Enwrap one fatherless?

ZAPO. (*Unseen.*) One fatherless!

BETH. (*Starting.*)
A sweeter voice!—A voice of love and pity!
Was it the softened echo of mine own?
Sad echo! but the hope, it kill'd, was sickly,
And ere it died it had been mourned as dead!
One other hope yet lives within my soul:
Quick let me ask!—while yet this stifling fear,
This stop of the heart, leaves utterance!—Are—are these

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The sole remains of her that gave me life?
Have I a mother?—(ZAPOLYA *rushes out to embrace him.* BETHLEN *starts.*)
Ha!

ZAPO. (*Embracing him.*) My son! my son!
A wretched—Oh no, no! a blest—a happy mother!
(*They embrace.* KIUPRILI *and* GLYCINE *come forward and the curtain drops.*)

END OF ACT II.

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ACT III.

SCENE I.

A stately room in LORD CASIMIR'S *castle. Enter* EMERICK *and* LASKA.

EMER. I do perceive thou hast a tender conscience,
Laska, in all things that concern thine own
Interest or safety.

LASK. In this sovereign presence
I can fear nothing, but your dread displeasure.

EMER. Perchance, thou think'st it strange, that *I* of all men
Should covet thus the love of fair Sarolta,
Dishonoring Casimir?

LASK. Far be it from me!
Your majesty's love and choice bring honor with them.

EMER. Perchance, thou hast heard, that Casimir is my friend,

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Fought for me, yea, for my sake, set at nought
A parent's blessing; braved a father's curse?
LASK. (*Aside.*)
Would I but knew now, what his Majesty meant!
Oh yes, Sire! 'tis our common talk, how Lord
Kiuprili, my Lord's father—
EMER. 'Tis your talk,
Is it, good statesman Laska?
LASK. No, not mine,
Not mine, an please your Majesty! There are
Some insolent malcontents indeed that talk thus—
Nay worse, mere treason. As Bathory's son,
The fool that ran into the monster's jaws.
EMER. Well, 'tis a loyal monster if he rids us
Of traitors! But ar't sure the youth's devoured?
LASK. Not a limb left an please your majesty!
And that unhappy girl—
EMER. Thou followed'st her
Into the wood? (LASKA *bows assent.*)
Henceforth then I'll believe
That jealousy can make a hare a lion.
LASK. Scarce had I got the first glimpse of her veil
When, with a horrid roar that made the leaves
Of the wood shake—

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EMER. Made thee shake like a leaf!

LASK. The war-wolf leapt; at the first plunge he seized her;
Forward I rushed!

EMER. Most marvellous!

LASK. Hurled my javelin
Which from his dragon-scales recoiling—

EMER. Enough!
And take, friend, this advice. When next thou tonguest it,
Hold constant to thy exploit with this monster,
And leave untouched your *common talk* aforesaid,
What your Lord did, or should have done.

LASK *My* talk?
The saints forbid! I always said, for my part,
" *Was not the king Lord Casimir's dearest friend?*
" *Was not that friend a king? Whate'er he did*
" *'Twas all from pure love to his majesty.*"

EMER. And this then was *thy* talk? While knave and coward,
Both strong within thee, wrestle for the uppermost,
In slips the fool and takes the place of both.
Babbler! Lord Casimir did, as thou and all men.
He lov'd himself, lov'd honors, wealth, dominion.

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All these were set upon a father's head:
Good truth! a most unlucky accident!
For he but wished to hit the prize; not graze
The head that bore it: so with steady eye
Off flew the parricidal arrow.—Even
As Casimir lov'd Emerick, Emerick
Loves Casimir, intends *him* no dishonor.
He winked not then, for love of *me* forsooth!
For love of me now let him wink! Or if
The dame prove half as wise as she is fair,
He may still pass his hand, and find all smooth.
(*Passing his hand across his brow.*)

LASK. Your majesty's reasoning has convinced me.

EMER. (*With a slight start, as one who had been talking aloud to himself: then with scorn.*)
Thee!
'Tis well! and more than meant. For by my faith
I had half forgotten thee.—Thou hast the key?
(LASKA *bows.*)
And in your lady's chamber there's full space?

LASK. Between the wall and arras to conceal you.

EMER. Here! This purse is but an earnest of thy fortune,
If thou prov'st faithful. But if thou betray'st me,

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Hark you!—the wolf, that shall drag *thee* to his den
Shall be no fiction.

(*Exit* EMERICK. LASKA *manet with a key in one hand, and a purse in the other.*)

LASK. Well then! Here I stand,
Like Hercules, on either side a goddess.
Call this (*Looking at the purse.*)
Preferment; this (*Holding up the key.*) Fidelity!
And first my golden goddess: what bids she?
Only:—"*This way your majesty! hush! The household*
Are all safe lodged."—Then, put Fidelity
Within her proper wards, just turn her round—
So—the door opens—and for all the rest,
'Tis the king's deed, not Laska's. Do but this
And—"*I'm the mere earnest of your future fortune.*"
But what says the other?—Whisper on! I hear you!
(*Putting the key to his ear.*)
All very true!—but, good Fidelity!
If I refuse king Emerick, will you promise,
And swear now, to unlock the dungeon door,
And save me from the hangman? Aye! you're silent!
What not a word in answer? A clear nonsuit!—

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Now for one look to see that all are lodged
At the due distance—then—yonder lies the road
For Laska and his royal friend king Emerick!
(*Exit* LASKA. *Then enter* BATHORY *and* BETHLEN.)

BETH. He looked as if he were some God disguised
In an old warrior's venerable shape
To guard and guide my mother. Is there not
Chapel or oratory in this mansion?

BATHO. Even so.

BETH. From that place then am I to take
A helm and breast-plate, both inlaid with gold,
And the good sword that once was Raab Kiuprili's.

BATHO. Those very arms this day Sarolta show'd me—
With wistful look. I'm lost in wild conjectures!

BETH. O tempt me not, e'en with a wandering guess,
To break the first command, a mother's will
Imposed, a mother's voice made known to me!
Ask not my son," said she, "*our names or thine.*
The shadow of th' eclipse is passing off
The full orb of thy destiny! Already
The victor Crescent glitters forth and sheds
O'er the yet lingering haze a phantom light.

Thou can'st not hasten it! Leave then to Heaven
The work of Heaven: and with a silent spirit
Sympathize with the powers that work in silence!
Thus spake she, and she look'd, as she were then
Fresh from some heavenly vision!

(*Re-enter* LASKA, *not perceiving them.*)

LASK. All asleep!
(*Then observing* BETHLEN, *stands in idiot-affright.*
I must speak to it first—Put—put the question!
I'll confess all! (*Stammering with fear.*)

BATHO. Laska! what ails thee, man?

LASK. (*Pointing to* BETHLEN.)
There!

BATHO. I see nothing! where?

LASK. He does not see it!
Bethlen, torment me not!

BETH. Soft! Rouse him gently!
He hath outwatch'd his hour, and half asleep,
With eyes half open, mingles sight with dreams.

BATHO. Ho! Laska! Don't you know us? 'tis Bathory
And Bethlen!

LASK. (*Recovering himself*)
Good now! Ha! ha! An excellent trick.

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Afraid? Nay no offence! But I must laugh.
But are you sure now, that 'tis you, yourself?

BETH. (*Holding up his hand as if to strike him.*)
Would'st be convinced?

LASK. No nearer, pray! consider!
If it *should* prove his ghost, the touch would freeze me
To a tombstone. No nearer!

BETH. The fool is drunk!

LASK. (*Still more recovering.*)
Well now! I love a brave man to my heart.
I myself braved the monster, and would fain
Have saved the false one from the fate, she tempted.

BATHO. *You*, Laska?

BETH. (*To* BATHO.) Mark! Heaven grant it may be so! Glycine?

LASK. She! I traced her by the voice.
You'll scarce believe me, when I say I heard
The close of a song: the poor wretch had been singing:
As if she wished to compliment the war-wolf
At once with music and a meal!

BETH. (*To* BATHORY.) Mark that!

LASK. At the next moment I beheld her running,
Wringing her hands with, "*Bethlen! O poor Bethlen!*"
I almost fear, the sudden noise I made,

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Rushing impetuous through the brake, alarm'd her.
She stopt, then mad with fear, turned round and ran
Into the monster's gripe. One piteous scream
I heard. There was no second—I—

BETH. Stop there!
We'll spare your modesty! Who dares not honor
Laska's brave tongue, and high heroic fancy?

LASK. You too, Sir Knight, have come back safe and sound!
You play'd the hero at a cautious distance!
Or was it that you sent the poor girl forward
To stay the monster's stomach? Dainties quickly
Pall on the taste and cloy the appetite!

BATHO. Laska, beware! Forget not what thou art!
Should'st thou but dream thou'rt valiant, cross thyself!
And ach all over at the dangerous fancy!

LASK. What then! you swell upon my lady's favor?
High Lords and perilous of one day's growth!
But other judges now sit on the bench!
And haply, Laska hath found audience there,
Where to defend the treason of a son
Might end in lifting up both Son and Father
Still higher; to a height from which indeed
You both *may* drop, but, spite of fate and fortune,

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Will be secured from falling to the ground.
'Tis possible too, young man! that royal Emerick,
At Laska's rightful suit, may make enquiry
By whom seduced, the maid so strangely missing—

BETH. Soft! my good Laska! might it not suffice,
If to yourself, being Lord Casimir's steward,
I should make record of Glycine's fate?

LASK. 'Tis well! it shall content me! tho' your fear
Has all the credit of these lowered tones.
[*Then very pompously.*
First we demand the manner of her death?

BETH. Nay! that's superfluous! Have you not just told us,
That you yourself, led by impetuous valor,
Witnessed the whole? My tale's of later date.
After the fate, from which your valor strove
In vain to rescue the rash maid, I saw her!

LASK. Glycine?

BETH. Nay! Dare I accuse wise Laska,
Whose words find access to a monarch's ear,
Of a base, braggart lie? It must have been
Her spirit that appeared to me. But haply
I come too late? It has itself delivered
Its own commission to you?

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BATHO. 'Tis most likely!
And the ghost doubtless vanished, when we entered
And found *brave* Laska staring wide—at nothing!

LASK. 'Tis well! You've ready wits! I shall report them,
With all due honor, to his Majesty!
Treasure them up, I pray! A certain person,
Whom the king flatters with his confidence,
Tells you, his royal friend asks startling questions!
'Tis but a hint! And now what says the ghost?

BETH. Listen! for thus it spake: "*Say thou to Laska,*
Glycine, knowing all thy thoughts engross'd
In thy new office of king's fool and knave,
Foreseeing thou'lt forget with thine own hand
To make due penance for the wrongs thou'st caused her,
For thy soul's safety, doth consent to take it
From Bethlen's cudgel"—thus. [*Beats him off.*
Off! scoundrel! off!
[LASKA *runs away.*

BATHO. The sudden swelling of this shallow dastard
Tells of a recent storm: the first disruption
Of the black cloud that hangs and threatens o'er us.

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BETH. E'en this reproves my loitering. Say where lies
The oratory?
BATHO. Ascend yon flight of stairs!
Midway the corridor a silver lamp
Hangs o'er the entrance of Sarolta's chamber,
And facing it, the low arch'd oratory!
Me thou'lt find watching at the outward gate:
For a petard might burst the bars, unheard
By the drench'd porter, and Sarolta hourly
Expects Lord Casimir, spite of Emerick's message!
BETH. There I will meet you! And till then good night!
Dear good old man, good night!
BATHO. O yet one moment!
What I repell'd, when it did seem my own,
I cling to, now 'tis parting—call me father!
It can not now mislead thee. O my son,
Ere yet our tongues have learnt another name,
Bethlen!—say—Father to me!
BETH. Now, and for ever
My father! other sire than thou, on earth
I never had, a dearer could not have!
From the base earth you raised me to your arms,

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And I would leap from off a throne, and kneeling,
Ask Heaven's blessing from thy lips. My father!

BATHO. Go! Go!

(BETHLEN *breaks off and exit.* BATHORY *looks affectionately after him.)*

May every star now shining over us,
Be as an angel's eye, to watch and guard him!

[*Exit* BATHORY.

Scene changes to a splendid Bed-chamber, hung with tapestry. SAROLTA *in an elegant Night Dress, and an Attendant.*

ATTEND. We all did love her, madam!

SAROL. She deserved it!
Luckless Glycine! rash unhappy girl!
'Twas the first time she e'er deceived me.

ATTEND. She was in love, and had she not died thus,
With grief for Bethlen's loss, and fear of Laska,
She would have pined herself to death at home.

SAROL. Has the youth's father came back from his search?

ATTEND. He never will, I fear me. O dear lady!
That Laska did so triumph o'er the old man—

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It was quite cruel—" *You'll be sure,*" said he,
" *To meet with* PART *at least of your son Bethlen,*"
" *Or the war-wolf must have a quick digestion!*"
" *Go! Search the wood by all means! Go! I pray you!*"

SAROL. Inhuman wretch!

ATTEND. And old Bathory answered
With a sad smile, " *It is a witch's prayer,*
And may Heaven read it backwards." Tho' she was rash,
'Twas a small fault for such a punishment!

SAROL. Nay! 'twas my grief, and not my anger spoke.
Small fault indeed! but leave me, my good girl!
I feel a weight that only prayer can lighten.

[*Exit Attendant.*

O *they* were innocent, and yet have perish'd
In their May of life; and Vice grows old in triumph.
Is it Mercy's hand, that for the bad man holds
Life's closing gate? ——————
Still passing thence petitionary Hours
To woo the obdurate spirit to repentance?
Or would this chillness tell me, that there is
Guilt too enormous to be duly punished,

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Save by increase of guilt? The Powers of Evil
Are jealous claimants. Guilt too hath its ordeal
And Hell its own probation!—Merciful Heaven,
Rather than this, pour down upon thy suppliant
Disease, and agony, and comfortless want!
O send us forth to wander on, unsheltered!
Make our food bitter with despised tears!
Let viperous scorn hiss at us as we pass!
Yea, let us sink down at our enemy's gate,
And beg forgiveness and a morsel of bread!
With all the heaviest worldly visitations
Let the dire father's curse that hovers o'er us
Work out its dread fulfilment, and the spirit
Of wronged Kiuprili be appeased. But only,
Only, O merciful in vengeance! let not
That plague turn inward on my Casimir's *soul!*
Scare thence the fiend Ambition, and restore him
To his own heart! O save him! Save my husband!

(*During the latter part of this speech* EMERICK *comes forward from his hiding place.* SAROLTA *seeing him, without recognizing him.*)

In such a shape a father's curse should come.

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EMER. (*advancing*) Fear not!

SAROL. Who art thou? Robber? Traitor?

EMER. Friend!

Who in good hour hath startled these dark fancies,
Rapacious traitors, that would fain depose
Joy, love, and beauty, from their natural thrones:
Those lips, those angel eyes, that regal forehead.

SAROL. Strengthen me Heaven! I must not seem afraid! (*aside.*)

The king to night then deigns to play the masker.
What seeks your Majesty?

EMER. Sarolta's love;

And Emerick's power lies prostrate at her feet.

SAROL. Heaven guard the sovereign's power from such debasement!

Far rather, Sire, let it descend in vengeance
On the base ingrate, on the faithless slave
Who dared unbar the doors of these retirements!
For whom? Has Casimir deserved this insult?
O my misgiving heart! If—if—from Heaven
Yet not from you, Lord Emerick!

EMER. Chiefly from me.

Has he not like an ingrate robb'd my court
Of Beauty's star, and kept my heart in darkness?

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First then on him I will administer justice—
If not in mercy, yet in love and rapture. [*Seizes her.*

SAROL. Help! Treason! Help!

EMER. Call louder! Scream again
Here's none can hear you!

SAROL. Hear me, hear me, Heaven!

EMER. Nay, why this rage? Who best deserves you? Casimir,
Emerick's bought implement, the jealous slave
That mews you up with bolts and bars? or Emerick
Who proffers you a throne? Nay, mine you shall be.
Hence with this fond resistance! Yield; then live
This month a widow, and the next a queen!

SAROL. Yet, yet for one brief moment
[*Struggling.*
Unhand me, I conjure you.

(*She throws him off, and rushes towards a toilet.* EMERICK *follows, and as she takes a dagger, he grasps it in her hand.*)

EMER. Ha! Ha! a dagger!
A seemly ornament for a lady's casket!
'Tis held, devotion is akin to love,
But yours is tragic! Love in war! It charms me,
And makes your beauty worth a king's embraces!

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(*During this Speech* BETHLEN *enters armed.*)

BETH. Ruffian forbear! Turn, turn and front my sword!

EMER. Pish! who is this!

SAROL. O sleepless eye of Heaven!
A blest, a blessed spirit! Whence camest thou?
May I still call thee Bethlen?

BETH. Ever, lady,
Your faithful soldier!

EMER. Insolent slave! Depart!
Know'st thou not *me?*

BETH. I know thou art a villain
And coward! That thy devilish purpose marks thee!
What else, this lady must instruct my sword!

SAROL. Monster, retire! O touch him not, thou blest one!
This is the hour, that fiends and damned spirits
Do walk the earth, and take what form they list!
Yon devil hath assumed a king's!

BETH. Usurped it!

EMER. The king will play the devil with thee indeed!
But that I mean to hear thee howl on the rack,

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I would debase this sword, and lay thee prostrate,
At this thy paramour's feet; then drag her forth
Stained with adulterous blood, and [*Then to* SAROLTA.
—mark you, traitress!
Strumpeted first, then turn'd adrift to beggary!
Thou prayed'st for't too.

SAROL. Thou art so fiendish wicked,
That in thy blasphemies I scarce hear thy threats!

BETH. Lady, be calm! fear not this king of the Buskin!
A king? Oh laughter! A king Bajazet!
That from some vagrant actor's tyring room,
Hath stolen at once his speech and crown!

EMER. Ah! treason!
Thou hast been lessoned and trick'd up for this!
As surely as the wax on thy death-warrant
Shall take the impression of this royal signet,
So plain thy face hath ta'en the mask of rebel!

[EMERICK *points his hand haughtily towards* BETHLEN, *who catching a sight of the signet, seizes his hand and eagerly observes the signet, then flings the hand back with indignant joy.*

BETH. It must be so! 'Tis e'en the counterpart!
But with a foul usurping cypher on it!

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The light hath flash'd from Heaven, and I must follow it!
O curst usurper! O thou brother-murderer!
That made'st a star-bright queen a fugitive widow!
Who fill'st the land with curses, being thyself
All curses in one tyrant! see and tremble!
This is Kiuprili's sword that now hangs o'er thee!
Kiuprili's blasting curse, that from its point
Shoots lightnings at thee. Hark! in Andreas' name,
Heir of his vengeance, hell-hound! I defy thee.

[*They fight, and just as* EMERICK *is disarmed, in rush* CASIMIR, OLD BATHORY, *and Attendants.* CASIMIR *runs in between the combatants, and parts them; in the struggle* BETHLEN'S *sword is thrown down.*

CASIM. The king! disarmed too by a stranger! Speak!
What may this mean?
EMER. Deceived, dishonored lord!
Ask thou yon fair adultress! She will tell thee
A tale, which would'st thou be both dupe and traitor,
Thou wilt believe against thy friend and sovereign!

Thou art present *now*, and a friend's duty ceases:
To thine own justice leave I thine own wrongs.
Of *half* thy vengeance, I perforce must rob thee,
For *that* the sovereign claims. To thy allegiance
I now commit this traitor and assassin.

[*Then to the Attendants.*

Hence with him to the dungeon! and to-morrow,
Ere the sun rises,—Hark! your heads or his!

BETH. Can Hell work miracles to mock Heaven's justice?

EMER. Who speaks to him dies! The traitor that has menaced
His king, must not pollute the breathing air,
Even with a word!

CASIM. (*To* BATHORY.) Hence with him to the dungeon!

[*Exit* BETHLEN, *hurried off by* BATHORY *and Attendants.*

EMER. We hunt to-morrow in your upland forest: Thou (*To* CASIM.) wilt attend us; and wilt then explain This sudden and most fortunate arrival.

[*Exit* EMERICK; *Manent* CASIMIR *and* SAROLTA.

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SAROL. My lord! my husband! look whose sword
lies yonder!

[*Pointing to the sword which* BETHLEN *had been disarmed of by the Attendants.*

It is Kiuprili's, Casimir; 'tis thy father's!
And wielded by a stripling's arm, it baffled,
Yea, fell like Heaven's own lightnings on that Tarquin.

CASIM. Hush! hush! [*In an under voice.*

I had detected ere I left the city
The tyrant's curst intent. Lewd, damned ingrate!
For him did I bring down a father's curse!
Swift, swift must be our means! To-morrow's sun
Sets on his fate or mine! O blest Sarolta!

[*Embracing her.*

No other prayer, late penitent, dare I offer,
But that thy spotless virtues may prevail
O'er Casimir's crimes, and dread Kiuprili's curse!

[*Exeunt consulting.*

END OF ACT III.

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ACT IV.

SCENE I.

A glade in a wood. Enter CASIMIR *looking anxiously round.*

CASIM. This needs must be the spot! O, here he comes!

Enter LORD RUDOLPH.

Well met Lord Rudolph!———
Your whisper was not lost upon my ear,
And I dare trust—
RUD. Enough! the time is precious!
You left Temeswar late on yester-eve?
And sojourn'd there some hours?
CASIM. I did so!
RUD. Heard you
Aught of a hunt preparing?

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CASIM. Yes; and met
The assembled huntsmen!

RUD. Was there no word given?

CAS. The word for me was this;—*The royal Leopard*
Chases thy milk-white dedicated Hind.

RUD. Your answer?

CASIM. As the word proves false or true
Will Casimir cross the hunt, or join the huntsmen?

RUD. The event redeemed their pledge?

CASIM. It did, and therefore
Have I sent back both pledge and invitation.
The spotless Hind hath fled to them for shelter,
And bears with her my seal of fellowship!

[*They take hands, &c.*

RUD. But Emerick! how when you reported to him
Sarolta's disappearance, and the flight
Of Bethlen with his guards?

CASIM. O he received it
As evidence of their mutual guilt. In fine,
With cozening warmth condoled with, and dismissed me.

RUD. I entered as the door was closing on you:
His eye was fix'd, yet seem'd to follow you
With such a look of hate, and scorn, and triumph,

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As if he had you in the toils already,
And were then choosing where to stab you first.
But hush! draw back!

CASIM. This nook is at the furthest
From any beaten track.

RUD. There! mark them!

[*Points to where* LASKA *and* PESTALUTZ *cross the Stage.*

CASIM. Laska!

RUD. One of the two I recognized this morning;
His name is Pestalutz; a trusty ruffian,
Whose face is prologue still to some dark murder.
Beware no stratagem, no trick of message,
Dispart you from your servants.

CASIM. (*Aside.*) I deserve it.
The comrade of that ruffian is my servant:
The one I trusted most and most preferred.
But we must part. What makes the king so late?
It was his wont to be an early stirrer.

RUD. And his main policy too.
T' enthral the sluggard nature in ourselves
Is, in good truth, the better half of the secret
T' enthral the world: for the will governs all.
See, the sky lowers! The cross-winds waywardly

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Chase the fantastic masses of the clouds
With a wild mockery of the coming hunt!

CASIM. Mark too, the edges of yon lurid mass!
Restless and vext, as if some angering hand,
With fitful, tetchy snatch, unrolled and pluck'd
The jetting ringlets of the vaporous fleece!
These are sure signs of conflict nigh at hand,
And elemental war!

[*A single trumpet heard at some distance.*

RUD. That single blast
Announces that the tyrant's pawing courser
Neighs at the gate! [*A volley of trumpets.*
Hark! now the king comes forth!
For ever 'midst this crash of horns and clarions
He mounts his steed, which proudly rears an-end
While he looks round at ease, and scans the crowd,
Vain of his stately form and horsemanship!
I must away! my absence may be noticed.

CASIM. Oft as thou can'st, essay to lead the hunt
Hard by the forest-skirts: and ere high noon
Expect our sworn confederates from Temeswar.
I trust, ere yet this clouded sun slopes westward,

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That Emerick's death, or Casimir's, will appease
The manes of Zapolya and Kiuprili!

[*Exit* RUDOLPH *and manet* CASIMIR.

The traitor, Laska!——
And yet Sarolta, simple, inexperienced,
Could see him as he was, and often warn'd me.
Whence learnt she this?—O she was innocent!
And to be innocent is nature's wisdom!
The fledge-dove knows the prowlers of the air,
Fear'd soon as seen, and flutters back to shelter.
And the young steed recoils upon his haunches,
The never-yet-seen adder's hiss first heard.
O surer than suspicion's hundred eyes
Is that fine sense, which to the pure in heart,
By mere oppugnancy of their own goodness,
Reveals the approach of evil. Casimir!
O fool! O parricide! thro' yon wood did'st thou,
With fire and sword, pursue a patriot father,
A widow and an orphan. Dar'st thou then,
(Curse-laden wretch) put forth these hands to raise
The ark, all sacred, of thy country's cause?
Look down in pity on thy son, Kiuprili!
And let this deep abhorence of his crime,

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Unstained with selfish fears, be his atonement!
O strengthen him to nobler compensation
In the deliverance of his bleeding country!

[*Exit* CASIMIR.

Scene changes to the mouth of a cavern as in ACT II.
ZAPOLYA *and* GLYCINE *discovered.*

ZAPO. Our friend is gone to seek some safer cave:
Do not then leave me long alone, Glycine!
Having enjoyed thy commune, loneliness,
That but oppressed me hitherto, now scares.

GLY. I shall know Bethlen at the furthest distance,
And the same moment I descry him, lady,
I will return to you. [*Exit* GLYCINE.

Enter BATHORY, *speaking as he enters.*

BATHO. Who hears? A friend!
A messenger from him who bears the signet!

[ZAPOLYA, *who had been gazing affectionately after* GLYCINE, *starts at* BATHORY'S *voice.*

ZAPO. He hath the watch word!—Art thou not Bathory?

BATHO. O noble lady! greetings from your son!

[BATHORY *kneels.*

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ZAPO. Rise! rise! Or shall I rather kneel beside thee,
And call down blessings from the wealth of Heaven
Upon thy honored head? When thou last saw'st me
I would full fain have knelt to thee, and could not,
Thou dear old man! How oft since then in dreams
Have I done worship to thee, as an angel
Bearing my helpless babe upon thy wings!

BATHO. O he was born to honor! Gallant deeds
And perilous hath he wrought since yester-eve.
Now from Temeswar (for to him was trusted
A life, save thine, the dearest) he hastes hither—

ZAPO. Lady Sarolta mean'st thou?

BATHO. She is safe.
The royal brute hath overleapt his prey,
And when he turn'd, a sworded Virtue faced him.
My own brave boy—O pardon, noble lady!
Your son———

ZAPO. Hark! Is it he?

BATHO. I hear a voice
Too hoarse for Bethlen's! 'Twas his scheme and hope,
Long ere the hunters could approach the forest
To have led you hence.—Retire.

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ZAPO. O life of terrors!

BATHO. In the cave's mouth we have such 'vantage ground
That even this old arm—

[*Exeunt* ZAPOLYA *and* BATHORY *into the Cave.*

Enter LASKA *and* PESTALUTZ.

LASK. Not a step further!

PESTA. Dastard! was this your promise to the king?

LASK. I have fulfilled his orders. Have walked with you
As with a friend: have pointed out Lord Casimir:
And now I leave you to take care of him;
For the king's purposes are doubtless friendly.

PESTA. (*affecting to start.*) Be on your guard, man!

LASK. (*in affright.*) Ha! what now?

PESTA. Behind you!
'Twas one of Satan's imps, that grinned and threatened you
For your most impudent hope to cheat his master!

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LASK. Pshaw! What you think 'tis fear that makes
me leave you?

PESTA. Is't not enough to play the knave to others,
But thou must lie to thine own heart?

LASK. (*Pompously.*)
Friend! Laska will be found at his own post,
Watching elsewhere for the king's interest.
There's a rank plot that Laska must hunt down,
'Twixt Bethlen and Glycine!

PESTA. (*With a sneer.*) What! the girl
Whom Laska saw the war-wolf tear in pieces?

LASK. (*Throwing down a bow and arrows.*)
Well! There's my arms! Hark! should your javelin
fail you,
These points are tipt with venom.
[*Starts and sees* GLYCINE *without.*
By Heaven! Glycine!
Now as you love the king, help me to seize her!
[*They run out after* GLYCINE, *and she shrieks without: Then enter* BATHORY *from the cavern.*

BATHO. Rest, lady, rest! I feel in every sinew
A young man's strength returning! Which way went
they?
The shriek came thence.

[*Clash of swords, and* BETHLEN'S *voice heard from behind the scenes;* GLYCINE *enters alarmed; then, as seeing* LASKA'S *bow and arrows.*

GLY. Ha! weapons here? Then, Bethlen, thy Glycine
Will die with thee or save thee!

[*She seizes them and rushes out,* BATHORY *following her. Lively and irregular music, and Peasants with hunting spears cross the Stage, singing chorally.*

CHORAL SONG.

Up, up! ye dames, ye lasses gay!
To the meadows trip away.
'Tis you must tend the flocks this morn,
And scare the small birds from the corn.
Not a soul at home may stay:
For the shepherds must go
With lance and bow
To hunt the wolf in the woods to day.

Leave the hearth and leave the house
To the cricket and the mouse:

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Find grannam out a sunny seat,
With babe and lambkin at her feet.
Not a soul at home may stay:
For the shepherds must go
With lance and bow
To hunt the wolf in the woods to day.

[*Re-enter, as the Huntsmen pass off,* BATHORY, BETHLEN, *and* GLYCINE.

GLY. (*Leaning on* BETHLEN.)
And now once more a woman—

BETH. Was it then
That timid eye, was it those maiden hands
That sped the shaft, which saved me and avenged me?

BATHO. (*To* BETHLEN, *exultingly.*)
'Twas as a vision blazon'd on a cloud
By lightning, shap'd into a passionate scheme
Of life and death! I saw the traitor, Laska,
Stoop and snatch up the javelin of his comrade;
The point was at your back, when her shaft reached him;
The coward turn'd, and at the self-same instant
The braver villain fell beneath your sword.

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Enter ZAPOLYA.

ZAPO. Bethlen! my child! and safe too!

BETH. Mother! Queen!

Royal Zapolya! name me Andreas!

Nor blame thy son, if being a king, he yet

Hath made his own arm, minister of his justice:

So do the Gods who launch the thunder-bolt!

ZAPO. O Raab Kiuprili! Friend! Protector! Guide

In vain we trench'd the altar round with waters,

A flash from Heaven hath touch'd the hidden incense—

BETH. (*Hastily.*)

And that majestic form that stood beside thee

Was Raab Kiuprili!

ZAPO. It was Raab Kiuprili;

As sure as thou art Andreas, and the king.

BATHO. Hail Andreas! hail my king! (*Triumphantly.*)

ANDR. Stop, thou revered one,

Lest we offend the jealous destinies

By shouts ere victory. Deem it then thy duty

To pay this homage, when 'tis mine to claim it.

GLY. Accept thine hand-maid's service! (*Kneeling.*)

ZAPO. Raise her, son!

O raise her to thine arms! she saved thy life,

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And, through her love for thee, she sav'd thy mother's!
Hereafter thou shalt know, that this dear maid
Hath other and hereditary claims
Upon thy heart, and with Heaven-guarded instinct
But carried on the work her Sire began!

ANDR. Dear maid! more dear thou can'st not be! the rest
Shall make my love religion. Haste we hence:
For as I reach'd the skirts of this high forest,
I heard the noise and uproar of the chace,
Doubling its echoes from the mountain foot.

GLY. Hark! Sure the hunt approaches.

[*Horn without, and afterwards distant thunder.*

ZAPO. O Kiuprili!

BATHO. The demon-hunters of the middle air
Are in full cry, and scare with arrowy fire
The guilty! Hark! now here, now there, a horn
Swells singly with irregular blast! the tempest
Has scatter'd them!

[*Horns heard as from different places at a distance.*

ZAPO. O Heavens! where stays Kiuprili?

BATHO. The wood will be surrounded! leave me here.

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ANDR. My mother! let me see *thee* once in safety,
I too will hasten back, with lightning's speed
To seek the hero!

BATHO. Haste! my life upon it
I'll guide him safe.

ANDR. (*Thunder again.*) Ha! what a crash was there!
Heaven seems to claim a mightier criminal
[*Pointing without to the body of* PESTALUTZ.
Than yon vile subaltern.

ZAPO. Your behest, High Powers,
Lo I obey! To the appointed spirit,
That hath so long kept watch round this drear cavern,
In fervent faith, Kiuprili, I entrust thee!

[*Exeunt* ZAPOLYA, ANDREAS, *and* GLYCINE. ANDREAS *having in haste dropt his sword.* *Manet* BATHORY.

BATHO. Yon bleeding corse, (*Pointing to* PESTALUTZ's *body*) may work us mischief still:
Once seen, 'twill rouse alarm and crowd the hunt
From all parts towards this spot. Stript of its armour,
I'll drag it hither.

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[*Exit* BATHORY. *After awhile several Hunters cross the stage as scattered. Some time after, enter* KIUPRILI *in his disguise, fainting with fatigue, and as pursued.*

KIUP. (*Throwing off his disguise.*)
Since Heaven alone can save me, Heaven alone
Shall be my trust.

[*Then speaking as to* ZAPOLYA *in the Cavern.*

Haste! haste! Zapolya flee!

[*He enters the Cavern, and then returns in alarm*

Gone! Seized perhaps? Oh no, let me not perish
Despairing of Heaven's justice! Faint, disarmed,
Each sinew powerless, senseless rock! sustain me!
Thou art parcel of my native land.

[*Then observing the sword.*

A sword!
Ha! and *my* sword! Zapolya hath escaped,
The murderers are baffled, and there lives
An Andreas to avenge Kiuprili's fall!—
There was a time, when this dear sword did flash
As dreadful as the storm-fire from mine arms—
I can scarce raise it now—yet come, fell tyrant!

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And bring with thee my shame and bitterer anguish,
To end *his* work and thine! Kiuprili now
Can take the death-blow as a soldier should.

Re-enter BATHORY, *with the dead body of* PESTALUTZ.

BATHO. Poor tool and victim of another's guilt!
Thou follow'st heavily: a reluctant weight!
Good truth, it is an undeserved honor
That in Zapolya and Kiuprili's cave
A wretch like thee should find a burial-place.

[*Then observing* KIUPRILI.

'Tis he!—In Andreas' and Zapolya's name
Follow me, reverend form! Thou need'st not speak,
For thou can'st be no other than Kiuprili!

KIUP. And are they safe? (*Noise without.*)

BATHO Conceal yourself, my lord!
I will mislead them!

KIUP. Is Zapolya safe?

BATHO. I doubt it not; but haste, haste, I conjure you!

[*As he retires, in rushes* CASIMIR.

CASIM. (*Entering*) Monster!
Thou shalt not now escape me!

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BATHO. Stop, lord Casimir!
It is no monster.

CASIM. Art thou too a traitor?
Is this the place where Emerick's murderers lurk?
Say where is he that, trick'd in this disguise,
First lur'd me on, then scar'd my dastard followers?
Thou must have seen him. Say where is th' assassin?

BATHO. There (*Pointing to the body of* PESTALUTZ) lies the assassin! slain by that same sword
That was descending on his curst employer,
When entering thou beheld'st Sarolta rescued!

CASIM. Strange providence! what then was he who fled me?

[BATHORY *points to the Cavern, whence* KIUPRILI *advances.*

Thy looks speak fearful things! Whither, old man!
Would thy hand point me?

BATHO. Casimir, to thy father.

CASIM. (*Discovering* KIUPRILI.)
The curse! the curse! Open and swallow me,
Unsteady earth! Fall, dizzy rocks! and hide me!

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BATHO. Speak, speak my lord! (*To* KIUPRILI.)

KIUP. (*Holds out the sword to* BATHORY.)
Bid him fulfil his work!

CASIM. Thou art Heaven's immediate minister, dread spirit!
O for sweet mercy, take some other form,
And save me from perdition and despair!

BATHO. He lives!

CASIM. Lives? A father's curse can never die!

KIUP. O Casimir! Casimir! (*In a tone of pity.*)

BATHO. Look! he doth forgive you!
Hark! 'tis the tyrant's voice. (EMERICK's *voice without.*)

CASIM. I kneel, I kneel!
Retract thy curse! O, by my mother's ashes,
Have pity on thy self-abhorring child!
If not for me, yet for my innocent wife,
Yet for my country's sake, give my arm strength,
Permitting me again to call thee father!

KIUP. Son, I forgive thee! Take thy father's sword;
When thou shalt lift it in thy country's cause,
In that same instant doth thy father bless thee!

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[KIUPRILI *and* CASIMIR *embrace; they all retire to the Cavern supporting* KIUPRILI. CASIMIR *as by accident drops his robe, and* BATHORY *throws it over the body of* PESTALUTZ.

EMER. (*Entering.*)
Fools! Cowards! follow!—or by Hell I'll make you
Find reason to fear Emerick, more than all
The mummer-fiends that ever masqueraded
As gods or wood-nymphs!—

[*Then sees the body of* PESTALUTZ, *covered by* CASIMIR'S *cloak.*

Ha! 'tis done then!
Our necessary villain hath proved faithful,
And there lies Casimir, and our *last* fears!
Well!—Aye, well!——
And is it *not* well? For tho' grafted on us,
And filled too with our sap, the deadly power
Of the parent poison-tree, lurk'd in its fibres:
There was too much of Raab Kiuprili in him:
The old enemy look'd at me in his face,
E'en when his words did flatter me with duty.

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(*As* EMERICK *moves towards the body, enter from the Cavern,* CASIMIR *and* BATHORY.)

BATHO. (*Pointing to where the noise is, and aside to* CASIMIR.)
This way they come!

CASIM. (*Aside to* BATHORY.) Hold them in check awhile,
The path is narrow! Rudolph will assist thee.

EMER. (*Aside, not perceiving* CASIMIR *and* BATHORY, *and looking at the dead body.*)
And ere I ring the alarum of my sorrow,
I'll scan that face once more, and murmur—Here
Lies Casimir, the last of the Kiuprilis!
[*Uncovers the face and starts.*
Hell! 'tis Pestalutz!

CASIM. (*Coming forward.*)
Yes, thou ingrate Emerick!
'Tis Pestalutz; 'tis thy trusty murderer!
To quell thee more, see Raab Kiuprili's sword!

EMER. Curses on it, and thee! Think'st thou that petty omen
Dare whisper fear to Emerick's destiny?

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Ho! Treason! Treason!

CASIM. Then have at thee, tyrant!

[*They fight.* EMERICK *falls.*

EMER. Betrayed and baffled
By mine own tool!——Oh! (*dies.*)

CASIM. (*Triumphantly.*) Hear, hear my father!
Thou should'st have witnessed thine own deed. O Father,
Wake from that envious swoon! The tyrant's fallen!
Thy sword hath conquered! As I lifted it
Thy blessing did indeed descend upon me;
Dislodging the dread curse. It flew forth from me
And lighted on the tyrant!

Enter RUDOLPH, BATHORY, *and Attendants.*

RUD. and BATHO. (*Entering.*) Friends! friends Casimir!

CASIM. Rejoice, Illyrians! the usurper's fallen.

RUD. So perish tyrants! so end usurpation!

CASIM. Bear hence the body, and move slowly on
One moment ———
Devoted to a joy that bears no witness,
I follow you, and we will greet our countrymen

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With the two best and fullest gifts of heaven—
A tyrant fallen, a patriot chief restored!

[*Exeunt* CASIMIR *into the Cavern. The rest on the opposite side.*

Scene changes to a splendid Chamber in CASIMIR'S *Castle.* CONFEDERATES *discovered.*

1st CONFED. It can not but succeed, friends. From this palace
E'en to the wood, our messengers are posted
With such short interspace, that fast as sound
Can travel to us, we shall learn the event!

Enter another CONFEDERATE.

What tidings from Temeswar?

2d CONFED. With one voice
Th' assembled chieftains have deposed the tyrant:
He is proclaimed the public enemy,
And the protection of the law withdrawn.

1st CONFED. Just doom for him, who governs without law!
Is it known on whom the sov'reignty will fall?

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2d CONFED. Nothing is yet decided: but report
Points to Lord Casimir. The grateful memory
Of his renowned father——

Enter SAROLTA.

Hail to Sarolta!

SAROL. Confederate friends! I bring to you a joy
Worthy your noble cause! Kiuprili lives,
And from his obscure exile, hath returned
To bless our country. More and greater tidings
Might I disclose; but that a woman's voice
Would mar the wonderous tale. Wait we for him,
The partner of the glory—Raab Kiuprili;
For he alone is worthy to announce it.

[*Shouts of* "Kiuprili, Kiuprili," *and* "The Tyrant's fallen," *without. Then enter* KIUPRILI, CASIMIR, RUDOLPH, BATHORY, *and Attendants, after the clamour has subsided.*)

KIUP. Spare yet your joy, my friends! A higher
waits you:
Behold, your Queen!

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Enter from opposite side, ZAPOLYA *and* ANDREAS, *royally attired, with* GLYCINE.

CONFEDS. Comes she from heaven to bless us?

Other CONFEDS. It is! it is!

ZAPO. Heaven's work of grace is full!
Kiuprili, thou art safe!

KIUP. Royal Zapolya!
To the heavenly powers, pay we our duty first;
Who not alone preserv'd thee, but for thee
And for our country, the one precious branch
Of Andreas' royal house. O countrymen,
Behold your king! And thank our country's genius,
That the same means which have preserv'd our sovereign,
Have likewise rear'd him worthier of the throne
By virtue than by birth. Th' undoubted proofs
Pledged by his royal mother, and this old man,
(Whose name henceforth be dear to all Illyrians)
We haste to lay before the assembled council.

ALL. Hail, Andreas! Hail, Illyria's rightful king!

ANDR. Supported thus, O friends! 'twere cowardice
Unworthy of a royal birth, to shrink

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From the appointed charge. Yet, while we wait
The awful sanction of convened Illyria,
In this brief while, O let me feel myself
The child, the friend, the debtor!—Heroic mother!—
But what can breath add to that sacred name?
Kiuprili! gift of Providence, to teach us
That loyalty is but the public form
Of the sublimest friendship, let my youth
Climb round thee, as the vine around its elm:
Thou *my* support, and *I* thy faithful fruitage.
My heart is full, and these poor words express not,
They are but an art to check, its overswelling.
Bathory! shrink not from my filial arms!
Now, and from henceforth thou shalt not forbid me
To call thee father! And dare I forget
The powerful intercession of thy virtue,
Lady Sarolta! Still acknowledge me
Thy faithful soldier!—But what invocation
Shall my full soul address to thee, Glycine?
Thou sword that leap'st forth from a bed of roses;
Thou falcon-hearted dove?

ZAPO. Hear that from me, son!

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For ere she liv'd, her father sav'd *thy* life,
Thine, and thy fugitive mother's!

CASIM. Chef Ragozzi?
O shame upon my head! I would have given her
To a base slave!

ZAPO. Heaven overruled thy purpose,
And sent an angel (*Pointing to* SAROLTA.) to thy house
to guard her!
Thou precious bark! freighted with all our treasures!
(*To Andreas.*)
The sport of tempests, and yet ne'er the victim,
How many may claim salvage in thee!
(*Pointing to Glycine.*) Take her, son!
A queen that brings with her a richer dowry
Than orient kings can give!

SAROL. A banquet waits!—
On this auspicious day, for some few hours
I claim to be your hostess. Scenes so awful
With flashing light, force wisdom on us all!
E'en women at the distaff hence may see,
That bad men may rebel, but ne'er be free;
May whisper, when the waves of faction foam,
None love their country, but who love their home;

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For freedom can with those alone abide,
Who wear the golden chain, with honest pride,
Of love and duty, at their own fire-side:
While mad ambition ever doth caress
Its own sure fate, in its own restlessness!

FINIS.

S. Curtis, Camberwell Press.

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